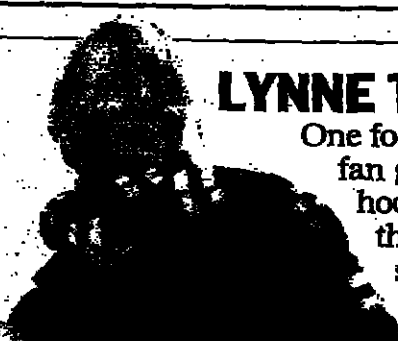




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The most explosive political
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IN TOMORROW'S WEEKEND
Sandra Parsons meets
Alistair McAlpine

Labour abandons confidence vote

Ulster deal to protect Major until May 1

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLLY NEWTON AND NICHOLAS WATT

THE Ulster Unionists threw John Major the lifeline that should keep him in power until May 1 yesterday after the Government agreed to increase the powers of the special parliamentary committee that monitors Northern Ireland.

The deal was announced by the Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble, who made clear that he saw no point in trying to force an early election. He added that his personal preference was for a late contest.

Labour cannot force the Government out of office without Unionist backing, so it abandoned thoughts of staging a Commons confidence vote next week, fearing that it would merely give the Government a chance to rally and regroup after yesterday's Writral South by-election.

Donald Dewar, the Chief Whip, said: "I am sorry we cannot go ahead. I would like to have gone ahead, but there is no point in putting down a motion without the Ulster Unionists."

Mr Trimble did not rule out voting against the Government when he announced the grand committee deal yesterday, but the tone of his remarks fitted in with his privately-held view that his party had nothing to gain by doing so. Senior Unionists believe that the next Government, of whatever hue, would distrust a minor party that was prepared to side with the Opposition on such a crucial vote.

Mr Trimble was dismissive

Jury trial curbs

Michael Howard has proposed curbs on the right to trial by jury and other substantial changes to the criminal justice system. Thousands of offenders, including burglars and some sex offenders, would be likely to receive lighter sentences. Page 4

of the prospects of an early election. "What is the point for a couple of weeks? If you have an early election, you would have Easter in the middle of the campaign. I can see arguments pro and con, possibly more con than pro. What is the point of them [Labour] putting a big effort in when all the difference is three weeks?" He was not even sure that Labour was in a position to get all its MPs to Westminster to a vote aimed at bringing down the Government.

And he added that for "selfish, personal reasons" he would prefer a May 1 poll, as he was hoping to spend St Patrick's Day in America.

Unionists were delighted that ministers had met many of their demands for new powers for a Northern Ireland Grand Committee in line with those in Wales and Scotland.

The powers, promised by Mr Major last October, were agreed after extensive consultation and Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, has written to each of the party leaders in Northern Ireland setting out the details of the new look

committee. All Northern Ireland MPs and up to 24 other MPs will serve on the committee, which will be able to question ministers on Province spending commitments announced in the Budget, interrogate all ministers about Northern Ireland affairs, and stage some meetings in Northern Ireland as well as Westminster. It will also be able to consider uncontested legislation affecting the Province.

However, nationalists have objected to such powers being conferred on the committee, seeing it as part of an integrationist agenda.

The Government's decision to beef up the committee came as ministers prepared to accede to Northern Ireland politicians' calls for the Stormont talks to be adjourned for the duration of the election campaign. The talks, which have failed to make any real progress since they opened last June, will be wound up next Wednesday until after the local government elections in Northern Ireland on May 21.

Mr Trimble said that other government moves — ranging from pressure on Brussels to lift the beef ban, on specified BSE-free herds, to bringing the Province in line with the rest of the country on "de-rating" village shops — were also important developments.

However, he denied that the Unionist votes had effectively been "bought" by the Government. "I don't see these positive things as buying us. I regard them as things that ought to have happened anyway."



Support for Ben Chapman, the Writral South Labour candidate, from his daughter Bridget, during yesterday's by-election

Tebbit lambasts 'tacky' Heseltine

By POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

MICHAEL HESELTINE has been accused by his former Cabinet colleague Lord Tebbit of conduct that is "tasteless, tacky if not dishonourable, and self-centered beyond even the call of his profession".

In a withering attack on the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Tebbit, once Tory party chairman, cites as an example the way Mr Heseltine tried to avoid National Service. He writes in a review of a new

Heseltine biography: "It is hard totally to condemn anyone knowing that National Service was coming to an end for seeking to escape completely. Having tried and failed to do that, to go on to escape from the Army by standing for Parliament in a hopelessly safe Labour seat is a more dubious, but still forgivable, play."

But it jars the nerves that after just 61 days' service as a second lieutenant Heseltine

wears his Guards tie as though he had served his regiment, not legally deserted it."

Mr Heseltine began his National Service in January 1959, when 25. A month after arriving, he was selected as Conservative candidate for the safe Labour seat of Gower in South Wales. In September 1959, when the election was called, he was allowed to resign from the Army under rules which prevented parlia-

mentary candidates from remaining in military service.

He had completed a third of the expected period of National Service and spent 61 days with the Welsh Guards. Three years later the rules were changed after a rash of applications by servicemen to stand for Parliament.

Lord Tebbit says in a review in *The Spectator* of Michael Crick's biography, *Michael*

Law comes into play as judge overrules rugby ban

By FRANCES GIBB AND MICHAEL HORSWELL

A RUGBY union star who challenged his suspension from the game yesterday won a High Court ruling that opens the way to similar actions against sporting bodies whose decisions affect players' livelihoods.

Mark Jones, a Welsh player who was sent off for fighting during a game against Swansea, won a ruling that he should not be suspended for four weeks pending his appeal.

In a decision which lawyers said marked the new professional climate of the game, Mrs Justice Ebsworth granted an injunction allowing Jones back on the field until an appeal over a disciplinary committee's decision is heard.

Jones, Ebbw Vale's No 8, said that his four-week suspension by the Welsh Rugby Union's disciplinary committee was unfair because he did not have a sufficient chance to put his side of the case.

The player is paid £29,000 a year, can earn bonuses of £10,000 for winning key games, and was "a vital member of the side". He can now continue playing until an appeal is heard or — if that fails — at a full High Court trial.

Mrs Justice Ebsworth said that sporting decisions had for years been made from "wet and windy" touchlines. But the new professional game meant that those decisions now affected "many people who earn a living".

She said it was "naïve" to contend — as it had been until recently — that the decisions of disciplinary committees could not be challenged, because the sanctions imposed now had "economic results" on those affected. The judge said that the lawyer representing Jones

Santa joins the cloning debate

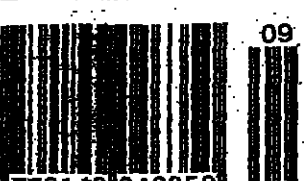
The President of the European Commission has asked his people to investigate whether there was a need for cloning by EU states to regulate genetics in the light of the successful cloning of a sheep carried out by British scientists. Jacques Santer has asked experts to produce a report on the ethical questions that arose. Page 2

Sacked Clinton aide spills beans

The disclosures about President Clinton's eagerness to reward big campaign contributors with overnight stays in the Lincoln bedroom and other White House perks came from Harold Ickes, the President's former deputy chief of staff, who was dismissed last year. Page 12

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The Queen goes into cyberspace

By ALAN HAMILTON

THE QUEEN, who prides herself on being a thoroughly modern monarch, is about to make one of the great technological leaps of her reign by having her own web site on the Internet.

From next Thursday, 35 million computer users around the world who are plugged into the global information network will be able to access 150 pages of royal facts, from the monarch's date of birth to the opening times of Buckingham Palace.

A Palace spokeswoman said yesterday: "We don't sit here with quill pens, you know, we are already highly computerised. The Internet can play a very important part in our public information role. The site's address is being kept secret until the Queen inaugurates the service next week at



Kingsbury School, Brent, north London.

Callers at the site will be able to find copious notes on royal history, finances, biographies of current family members and much more.

But there will be no items of gossip or personal information, such as whether the Queen's new television racing service has brought her more winners or where the Duchess of York will be taking her next foreign holiday.

Israeli President a boy with a new toy on RAF visit

By ALAN HAMILTON

EVEN if you are a 72-year-old head of state, once bitten by the flying bug, you cannot leave planes alone, and especially if you helped to found and once commanded your country's air force.

President Weizman of Israel joined the RAF in Egypt in 1942. Yesterday he returned to RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire as a guest which, without intending any slight to the Queen's

hospitality, he described as the pinnacle of his three-day visit to Britain.

When he squeezed into the cockpit of a Red Arrows Hawk trainer, his smile was that of a boy with a new toy as Squadron Leader Simon Meade described the controls — rather more complex than those of the Spitfires he flew in wartime India. He still occasionally flies a helicopter. "It may not be an F16, but to fly low at 130mph is a thrill for an old-timer," he said. Asked what he thought of the

present-day RAF, Mr Weizman said: "I saw the performances in the Gulf: they are excellent. It is a problem for both the RAF and the Israeli Air Force — how to be small but very good."

There are, however, important differences. The RAF now has women flying combat aircraft, and last year selected six more for pilot training. During his command of the Israeli Air Force, Mr Weizman resisted every pressure to put women in the cockpit. Last year, for the first time, the Israelis

accepted six for pilot training. All of them failed.

Clearly, for Mr Weizman, flying is a man's occupation. During his visit to Cranwell yesterday he reminisced with senior officers about his RAF days, but he did not mention that, when courting Reuma, his London-born wife, he supposedly flew his Spitfire over her tennis court and bombarded it with red roses.

Dogfight renewed, page 3

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RAF veteran renews dogfight with Israeli President



President Weizman, left, and in the Spitfire he was flying when he fired on RAF pilot Douglas Liquorish, pictured right in a Spitfire, after the Israeli mistook his plane for an Egyptian aircraft. Mr Liquorish said he bore no animosity

'He was very sneaky — but he did not shoot me down as he claimed'

DOUGLAS LIQUORISH is not sure if the RAF excluded him from their welcoming party for Ezer Weizman yesterday in case the two might have carried on their scrap from nearly 50 years ago.

They clashed in a dogfight over the Israeli desert in 1949 and have never met since, which disappoints 72-year-old Mr Liquorish as he wishes the President of Israel to know he bears him no animosity for crippling his Tempest fighter plane and giving him the fright of his life.

Britain was at peace on January 7, 1949, the day of an agreed ceasefire between Egypt and Israel, when four RAF Spitfires were ordered to patrol the disputed border to monitor troop movements and protect British military bases in Egypt. All four were shot down by Israeli ground fire or

Daniel McGrory meets a man with vivid memories of a deadly aerial duel over the Israeli desert almost 50 years ago

its Spitfires: one pilot was dead and three were still missing when Mr Liquorish and the others of 6 Squadron were scrambled from their base at Deversoir in the early afternoon.

"We didn't even know what the mission was when we took off, but once in the air it was made clear London was going mad about losing four planes in a day when we weren't supposed to be at war," Mr Liquorish said. The RAF pilots came up behind four Spitfires which they presumed were British.

Forty-eight years on he describes with vivid clarity

and expansive hand gestures how the four immediately banked away from the Britons as they flew over Rafah and then circled to appear from behind them. The Spitfires were being flown by the Israelis, who had mistaken them for Egyptians.

"He was very sneaky," Mr Liquorish recalled yesterday. "He and the other Israelis came out of the sun and blinded us. But he didn't shoot me down as he has always claimed. I made it home, battered but in one piece."

"One of our squadron was killed instantly and I saw his aircraft spiralling down and a

second later I felt the bullets tearing into my plane with one ending up buried in the seat armour right behind my head. That was my first time in combat." He still has the shell and would be delighted to return it to its rightful owner.

Mr Liquorish does not take issue with President Weizman's account that the Israelis mistook them for Egyptian Spitfires, even though his Tempest was half as big again and more bulbous than a Spitfire.

"At the speeds we were going and in that confusion he obviously shot first and asked questions later. Perhaps, the Israelis were a little trigger happy," he said. All three forces flew Spitfires, "which made life a bit complicated up there".

Another survivor from that encounter, Flight Lieutenant Brian Spragg, DFC, told yesterday how he was first to retaliate, firing on Weizman, damaging his Spitfire and forcing the Israeli into swift retreat. "If my aim had been better, by about two feet to the left, President Weizman would not be a guest of Her Majesty this week," Mr Spragg said.

"He was trying to do the same to me, but with some peculiar manoeuvres I got behind him and let loose on his tail," he said with practised understatement. His account of the dogfight in his pilot's log simply reports "had a



Mr Liquorish displays his pilot's log, and President Weizman on a visit to RAF Cranwell yesterday



tussle with a Yiddish Spit". Mr Liquorish does take exception to President Weizman's claim in his autobiography, *On Eagles' Wings*, that he downed the RAF plane at Al-Arish. "I steered that old crate home with one wing hanging off, it was bleeding oil and I didn't know if the hydraulics would work but I landed back at our own base, albeit somewhat clumsily." It

was not until the early 1980s and military records were released Mr Liquorish realised who his attacker was.

His former Squadron Leader, later to become Air Marshal Sir Denis Crowley-Milling, did meet President Weizman at a function. "He telephoned me and said, 'You were always a hot-tempered sort, Doug, so I had better not invite you in case you land one

on his chin'." Mr Liquorish said. His home in Norfolk is decorated with photographs and an oil painting of his Tempest, the *Lady Jane*, named after his then girlfriend. His wife, Beryl, was not forgiving: "I know Doug is keen to meet Mr Weizman but I still think I might punch him."

Her husband chastened her: "All is fair in love and

war. We were both as mad as hatters in those days — you had to be to fly planes like that. You did not think about the man in the cockpit, you just saw the plane and your only thought was to disable it, bring it down, not kill the fellow at the controls."

"It was self-preservation and I'm glad we both survived to tell the tale — albeit in our own different ways."

Spitfire sell-off challenged

THE sale of a salvaged Spitfire to an American collector has been challenged.

Arthur Woollass 69, a retired salvage engineer, says that he is prepared to go to court to prove he is the owner of the aircraft that was sold for £73,000 by two restoration enthusiasts at Sotheby's last November. He said yesterday: "I'm not interested in any money. All I want is justice."

That plane belongs to me," Mr Woollass said. The Spitfire crashed into mudflats on the Humber near Mr Woollass's home in Swineshead, North Lincolnshire, on September 9, 1944.

He says that his salvage claim was accepted by the Air Ministry in 1960. But in 1983 Stephen Arnold and Julian Mitchell, the eventual sellers, dug it out of the mud and started a 13-year restoration

project at their homes in Kidlington, Oxfordshire.

John Foster, Mr Woollass's solicitor, said: "Because of the age of Mr Woollass's claim the salvage work was probably undertaken in complete ignorance that he had previously been given permission."

Mr Woollass said: "I was shocked when I heard it had been sold. I never even knew it had been recovered."

Treasurer jailed for golf club fraud

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE treasurer of one of the country's oldest golf clubs has been jailed after he embezzled more than £120,000 earmarked for improvements to the green and clubhouse.

Alan Craddock, 46, a former senior official with Barclays Bank, earned £25,000 a year but ran two cars, one a high-powered Saab with a personalised numberplate.

Yesterday as he started a 24-year sentence, his former club colleagues were trying to get him banned from every club in the country. Craddock admitted stealing £123,000 from the Bishop Auckland Golf Club in Co Durham, when he appeared at the city's Crown Court.

Officials of the club, which was founded in 1894, thought the money was safe in an account at the branch where

Craddock had worked but when they approached the bank to discuss the project, they were told that they would need an overdraft.

Glynn Thatcher, the club secretary, said: "Lots of people feel very bitter. We've taken out a loan for £125,000 and will have to pay it back over 15 years. We should not have had to do that."

In 1991 Craddock started running short of cash and set up a secret second account and paid funds into it. He then forged documents to make it look like the real account was full.

Craddock, who was later made redundant, vanished last November when the deception was discovered. He booked into a hotel in York and wrote 18 suicide letters to friends and family but police traced him the next day.

Ex-college head is asked about missing artworks

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE former principal of a university college is to be questioned over missing works of art and furniture.

Duane Arnold resigned last month as head of St Chad's College at Durham after details of his qualifications listed in *Who's Who* and other reference directories proved to be false. He blamed clerical errors and a plot against him by academics who disapproved of his radical methods.

Since his return to America in December with his wife Jane, a part-time development director for the university, it has emerged that a number of items cannot be found.

After taking over in 1994 as



Arnold: resigned over bogus qualifications

head of the college, an independent body controlled by the Church of England, Dr Duane Wade-Hampton Arnold, 43, as he styled himself, began a number of alterations and redecorations to his 18th-century listed lodgings and other college buildings. One academic accused him of at-

tempting to convert the entrance hall of his lodgings near the Norman Cathedral into a replica of the Oval Office in the White House.

During the alterations several pieces of furniture, paintings and ornaments were put in store. Among the pieces college officials have been unable to trace and which may still be in storage are an 18th-century chest of drawers, an oil painting and about a dozen objects d'art.

The officials are attempting to contact Dr Arnold through his English solicitors to see if he can shed any light on their whereabouts.

The college authorities contacted Durham police over the matter but were told its officers could not start an investigation before the college had carried out a thorough check and had contacted Dr Arnold to see if he could help to trace the missing items.

Two win Hoover damages

By ADAM FRESCO

TWO customers who lost out in the Hoover free flights fiasco were awarded damages yesterday in a move that could lead to thousands of other claims against the company.

District Judge Bennett ruled that Hoover abused a get-out clause when it refused to issue tickets to America in the 1994 promotion, stating there could be only "one application per household". The firm said separate applications from the same address invalidated the claims but Judge Bennett, at St Helen's County Court, said the clause should not have cancelled out all rights to free tickets but restricted Hoover's obligation to provide two free tickets to the address.

He awarded £461 compensation to Peter Lucas, from Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, and £466 to Norman Magowan, of Belfast.

Father suspected son over murder

By A STAFF REPORTER

A SOLICITOR who became suspicious that his teenage son had been involved in the murder of one homosexual and an attack on another forced him to confess his role, a court was told yesterday.

Michael Bowmes, senior solicitor with Plymouth council, said he first began worrying about his son, Richard, when he realised he had done a load of washing in the middle of the night and did not get up to go to college. He had heard about the killing of Frederick Sweet, 64, and the attack on Bernard Hawken, 53, in Central Park, Plymouth, on the news and had slowly come to realise that his son was involved.

Richard Bowmes, 18, Roberto Pace, 18, and Stuart Smith, 19, all of Plymouth, deny murdering Mr Sweet, attempting to murder Mr Hawken and causing him

grievous bodily harm with intent.

The jury at Exeter Crown Court has been told that the two men were attacked separately on November 6 last year. Mr Sweet was killed by being kicked, punched and stamped on. Mr Hawken survived a similar attack but is still too ill to testify.

Mr Bowmes did not give evidence in person but his statement was read to the jury. He said he had confronted his son, who said he knew nothing about the attacks. Later, he had tackled him again. "I said to Richard, 'You were involved weren't you?' and he replied that he had thrown a punch but had not been involved in the beating. He said he had tried to stop it... He was trying to tell me he was on the fringes."

The case continues.

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Home Secretary heads for confrontation with judges and lawyers over proposals for swifter justice

Howard sets out plans to curb right to trial by jury

By RICHARD FORD AND FRANCES GIBB

MICHAEL HOWARD yesterday embarked on another confrontation with the legal profession by proposing curbs on the right to trial by jury and other substantial changes to the criminal justice system.

Thousands of offenders, including burglars and some sex offenders, would be likely to receive lighter sentences as a result of proposals for more cases to be dealt with by magistrates rather than the Crown Court. Seventeen-year-olds would be dealt with in adult rather than the youth courts and the Crown Prosecution Service would lose its power to discontinue cases on grounds that it would not be in public interest to prosecute.

A defendant pleading guilty could get free advice from a duty solicitor at court in the hope that they would be dealt with the day after being charged. Anyone seeking a delay because they could not get their own lawyer would be forced to use the duty solicitor.

Mr Howard published 33 detailed proposals in a report by a civil servant, saying that they would speed up the process of justice and reduce costs by £55 million. Fourteen of the measures would require legislation and all must now go out to consultation.

The Conservatives cannot introduce the proposals before the general election. If Labour

THE MAIN POINTS

Automatic right to elect jury trial withdrawn in range of cases, including assault, causing actual bodily harm, many indecency charges, theft and burglaries.

Offenders aged 17 to be dealt with by adult rather than youth courts.

CPS loses right to discontinue cases on public-interest grounds.

CPS staff to work from police stations to deal quickly with guilty pleas.

Stipendiary magistrates to sit alone in youth courts, particularly in complex cases.

Lay staff in CPS offices should be able to review case files, and non-lawyers employed by CPS should present uncontested cases in magistrates' courts.



Howard: quicker justice

Clerks to justices to manage pretrial preparation of all cases.

Youth court should administer cautions when an offence is admitted.

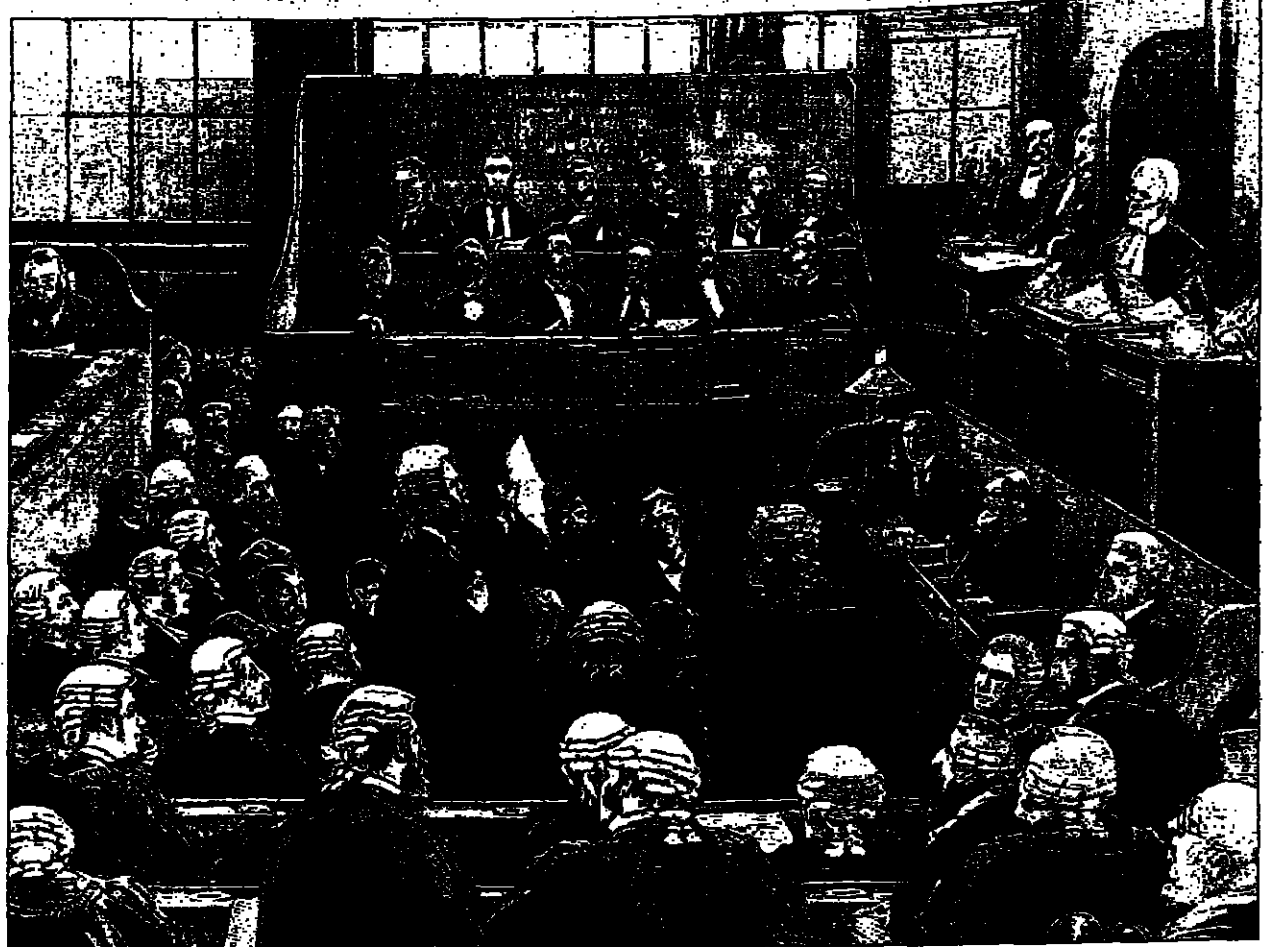
would result in 18,000 cases being heard by magistrates rather than in Crown Court, the report estimates. It could also lead to lighter sentences; the average jail term meted out by a magistrates' court is 28 months compared with 22 months in the Crown Court.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, told the Commons that Labour welcomed many of the recommendations, particularly reducing the age of adulthood in the courts from 18 to 17. But he said, any erosion of the right to jury trials would be wrong. "If a police officer or an MP or even the Secretary of State was charged with an offence of dishonesty, would they not insist on being tried by a jury?" he asked. "If that is the case, why should others be denied this right of election?"

Some senior judges have strong reservations about any erosion of trial by jury and over proposals to strengthen the role of the Crown Prosecution Service in police stations.

Magistrates welcomed many of the proposals to reduce delays but said that rather than the right to elect jury trial being curbed, they favoured offences being reclassified so that some could be tried only by magistrates. The Magistrates' Association also attacked the proposal that justices' clerks or court clerks should decide matters such as the trial venue.

The Bar Council con-



A jury at the Central Criminal Court as depicted more than a century ago. The system goes back to Magna Carta

demned the proposal on jury trial. Robert Owen, QC, the Bar chairman, said the proposals would have to be carefully considered but that "we do not believe that the interests of justice should ever be subordinated to the demands of administrative convenience". The proposal to remove the right of defendants to elect trial by jury would mean thousands of people losing the right to be tried by an ordinary

jury of men and women, he added.

"The Crown Court was 'delivering justice daily in thousands of cases which attract no publicity at all' - and it is doing it as swiftly as is consistent with doing justice to accuser and accused alike". It would also compound delays in magistrates' courts.

The Law Society strongly opposed the proposal, questioning the need for the Gov-

ernment to consider changing "such a fundamental right when it affects only a relatively small number of cases".

The right of defendants to opt for jury trial only results in a jury trial in about one in 200 cases. Of the cases committed to the Crown Court, only one in four reach there because of the defendant's choice. Robert Roscoe, of the society's criminal law committee, said that the interests of bureaucracy

should not come before the interests of justice.

Research done for the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice showed that 27 per cent of those electing trial intended from the outset to plead guilty. By the day of the trial, 83 per cent had pleaded guilty to some or all charges. Half those electing trial at the Crown Court believed that it would mean a lighter sentence, but this was mistaken.

Twelve good men and true are historic pillar of law

Frances Gibb, legal correspondent, looks at the history of the jury system, once called "the lamp that shows that freedom lives"

TRIAL by jury is regarded as a pillar of the English justice system, dating back at least to the 13th century and Magna Carta. But the right to elect jury trial instead of appearing before magistrates for certain offences has existed only for just over 100 years. In Scotland it does not exist: the prosecutor decides on the venue of trial.

Repeated attempts since the 1970s to curb jury trials have failed in the face of opposition from civil libertarians, the legal profession and MPs. Yesterday's proposals were drawn from a recommendation of the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice which reported under Lord Runciman of Doxford in 1993. It was the most controversial of the 352 recommendations made by the commission.

The origins of the jury are lost in history. The word comes from the Latin for law, *ius, juris*. The idea may have been indigenous or imported by the Norman invaders of 1066 but it was in place by the 13th century, gradually replacing trial by ordeal.

Jury trial was thought to be enshrined as a constitutional right in Magna Carta in 1215, which says that "no freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or dispossessed, or exiled, or in any way destroyed... except by the lawful judgment of his peers or/and by the law of the land". But historians now believe that this refers to a decision of a judge rather than a jury.

The original role of jurors was very different from that of today: they were witnesses who swore an oath but did not pronounce judgment. They came from the same neighbourhood as the accused and their job was to determine the facts of the case using their knowledge of him and local circumstances.

The anonymity of jurors developed as the close-knit medieval society broke down and towns grew. Now the 12 members of the jury are required to give an impartial verdict, and to do so must have no prior knowledge of the accused.

Many judges and historians have described the jury system as a safeguard of individual liberty. Lord Devlin, the late law lord, said the jury "is the lamp that shows that freedom lives". William Blackstone, the 18th-century legal historian, called it "the bulwark of our liberties, the glory of English law".

In principle the jury is a random selection of a defendant's peers but that has never been strictly true. Until 1972 there was a property-owning qualification, which meant cases were heard by mostly male householders.

In lengthy trials today there is a large proportion of housewives and elderly and unemployed people, because workers cannot afford a long period away from their job.

The Juries Act 1974 has a long list of those who are exempt or who can be excused from jury service, including members of the legal profession, clergymen and people convicted of criminal offences in the previous ten years.

Defendants were given the right to elect jury trial in the 1879 Summary Jurisdiction Act, which introduced the choice for all offences with a

maximum sentence exceeding three months in jail.

In 1975 the James Committee first proposed removing the right to elect jury trial for small thefts. The proposal was opposed by a majority in the Commons. In 1988, government officials put forward the idea again with the backing of the Lord Chief Justice at the time, Lord Lane. Again it proved controversial and the Government did not proceed.

In the civil courts, the role of the jury has declined hugely this century. As recently as 1933, 50 per cent of civil cases involved a jury. Today they are chiefly found in libel cases, although a jury of eight may be called at the county court at the discretion of the judge.

A coroner can call a jury of between seven and eleven people in some cases.



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Dexter's books are worldwide bestsellers and his *Inspector Morse* television series topped the ratings with 18 million viewers. Minette Walters has also had television success with *The Sculptress*.

The admission includes £2 off the price of Walters's new novel *The Echo* (£16.99) and £1 off Dexter's *Death is Now My Neighbour* (£9.99).

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£40m Knightsbridge robbery mastermind denies he is being treated too leniently

Prisoner swapped Parkhurst for Italian sunshine

By RICHARD OWEN IN ROME AND STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

VALERIO VICCEI, the man behind the £40 million Knightsbridge safe deposit robbery, described yesterday how he swapped a cell at Parkhurst for a life of virtual freedom under the Italian prison system.

Seven years after he was jailed for 22 years by an Old Bailey judge, Viccei, an "exemplary prisoner", is released from prison each day. He works in a publisher's office and each night returns to the prison at Pescara on the Adriatic coast.

Viccei was transferred to Italy four years ago. Under the Treaty of Strasbourg, offenders can ask to serve their sentences in their home country rather than the country where their crimes were committed.

Yesterday, stung by British

newspaper reports about his new-found freedom, Viccei put his case to *Corriere della Sera* newspaper. He said he was angered by suggestions in the British press that his transfer to Italy had been "scandalous". "All the others involved in the robbery have been let out of jails in Britain already, yet I am still a prisoner."

Viccei, nicknamed "The Wolf", got into trouble as a student when he became involved in right-wing terrorist groups in Italy. They carried out a number of bombings and shootings in the 1970s and 1980s.

"I had a passion for weapons, beautiful women and fast cars," he said. He also killed a man, a "psychopathic" fellow prisoner. He claimed self-defence and was acquitted.

By 1985, Viccei said, he had

come to the view that "a life of crime was leading me towards complete madness. I decided to make a new life for myself, and ran away to London." His attempts to go straight in Britain failed, "and one robbery led to another."

Viccei, 42, said life in Parkhurst top security prison on the Isle of Wight had been very tough: "They took away everything — my Ferrari, my Vuitton suitcases, my cashmere sweaters, my watches."

He chose Pescara, known for its up-market cafes and designer boutiques, "to be close to my family", who come from the area. He has a small flat, where he is allowed to spend some of the day before returning to prison.

Viccei, who maintains an athletic build, dresses with suave elegance. His only com-



Valerio Viccei, who goes to work from prison each day in Pescara, on the Adriatic, where he also has a flat

plaint is that he is not allowed to work in a lawyer's office, "in case I come into contact with members of the underworld". It is a prospect he regards as laughable, since he says he is "a completely reformed character".

Describing the 1987 rob-

bery, Viccei said that 114 safe deposit boxes in a vault near Harrods were cleared in under two hours. "No one was hurt, no shots were fired." He denied the haul had amounted to £40 million. "Some of the deposit boxes did not contain what the owners said they

contained. Other boxes — at least 40 of them — contained cash and valuables that must have been 'dirty', because after the robbery the owners never made a claim."

Despite his life in Pescara, Viccei rejects the idea that he is being treated leniently for a

life of crime, or that the Knightsbridge robbery was a successful "caper". On the contrary, he regards himself as a failure: "The rule in this game is that if they don't catch you, you're a genius, but if they do, you're a miserable nobody."

Parkinson's patient has pig cell transplant

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

PIG cells have been transplanted into the brain of a Parkinson's disease patient, where they survived for seven months.

The patient, a 69-year-old man, showed signs of recovery after the transplant but died of a blood clot in the artery to the lungs. A post-mortem examination showed that the pig cells had survived and spread within the man's brain.

In Parkinson's disease the brain cells that produce the chemical dopamine die off. Experiments in which patients have been given cells from human foetuses to restore the capability have been promising but there have been ethical objections.

As an alternative, a team led by Dr Ole Isacson at Harvard Medical School used foetal cells from pigs. In *Nature Medicine*, the team reports that the survival of the transplant suggests that pig cells may provide safe non-human tissue for transplantation to a large number of people with Parkinson's disease.

Muslims experience increase in hatred

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

HATRED of Islam and Muslims is prevalent in all sections of society and in the past 20 years has become more explicit, extreme and dangerous than ever, according to a report published yesterday.

Islamophobia affects the participation of Britain's 1½ million Muslims in public life, the education system and employment, the report says. It affects the amount of violence and harassment against adherents of the faith, suffer, and the extent of their poverty and deprivation.

The consultation paper, drawn up by leading churchmen, rabbis and academics, including the Bishop of London, the Right Rev Richard Chartres, was launched by the Runnymede Trust. It attempts to draw attention to the problem and highlight possible areas of action.

The paper argues that Islam is often seen as implacably hostile to the non-Islamic world. "It is certainly the case that Islam is depicted in Islamophobic discourse as wholly evil," the report says, arguing that anti-Islam prejudice in Britain is often mixed with racism.

Follow your hunches to make a decision

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

INTUITION may be more important in decision-making than thought. Scientists have found that successful decision-makers showed emotional responses before they took decisions: sweating slightly and becoming tense. In contrast, a group of brain-damaged individuals, who seemed unable to make sensible decisions suffered from a lack of intuitive instinct. They made their decisions calmly, and got them wrong.

The results have been hailed as "really exciting" by Dr Stephen Kosslyn, a psychologist of Harvard University. "Emotion apparently is not something that necessarily clouds reasoning but rather seems to provide an essential foundation for some kinds of reasoning," he says.

The experiments, reported in *Science*, were carried out by a team led by Anthony Damasio of the University of Iowa. He believes that people with damage to the prefrontal cortex of the brain are unable to remember rewards and punishments, so cannot trigger the emotional responses that we recognise as intuition — and so make bad decisions all their lives.

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Judge upholds refusal to fund blood treatment

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

A HIGH COURT judge yesterday rejected accusations by the families of four haemophilic boys that local health authorities had unlawfully refused to fund treatment with an expensive blood clotting agent because of the cost.

Mr Justice Jowitt said the health authorities were entitled to adopt certain policies and the parents would have a case only if they could show that the authorities had failed to consider whether their children had "special needs".

He said none of the families had yet applied for their children to be considered as exceptional and yesterday's applications for leave to apply for judicial review were "pre-

mature". The judge said they should not build up false expectations as it might prove difficult to prove their cases were exceptional.

He said he could see "no useful purpose" in granting the families permission to challenge the decisions made by South Lancashire, East Lancashire and Bury and Rochdale health authorities not to fund treatment with the genetically engineered blood product, recombinant Factor VIII. Until recently, the four boys, all from the North West and aged between 5 and 9, had been treated with recombinant Factor VIII, which was the preferred choice of treatment by their doctors. But in Nov-

ember last year the health authorities withdrew funding and said the boys could be equally well treated with a high purity form of human blood, saving about £200,000 a year in these four cases alone. The court heard that the three health authorities had decided that human blood-derived products were quite safe and the advantages of Factor VIII did not warrant the extra cost.

The families, one of whom attended court with their eight-year-old son, had hoped for a full judicial review of this decision, on the basis that such a blanket ruling was unfair. All four families were anxious that human blood-

derived products might contaminate their children with human diseases, such as strains of hepatitis, and said they wanted the same right as children in other parts of the country to receive recombinant Factor VIII.

Duncan Ouseley, QC, representing the families, told the judge that the artificially manufactured blood was the preferred treatment of clinicians at the hospital in Manchester where the boys were treated and gave the parents peace of mind. "The advantages are perceived as being in the avoidance of transmission of human diseases," he said.

He said the boys had switched to the new treatment in October last year but received a letter in November informing them that such advantages as there were to recombinant Factor VIII, did not warrant the extra cost of funding that treatment as "the benefit was too small for the cost". One family was particularly concerned because the boy's grandfather had died from hepatitis C contracted through contaminated human blood.

Robert Francis, QC, for the health authorities, told the court that human blood-derived products had "a very good safety record".

Tony Wilson, chief executive of the Haemophilia Society, said the society would continue to petition health authorities and the hospital trust involved to re-examine the ban on funding.



Judith Boylan after the IRA abduction, during which her long hair was cut off

IRA hacks off Catholic's hair

By NICHOLAS WATT
CHIEF IRELAND
CORRESPONDENT

MASKED IRA terrorists tied a Catholic girl to a lamp post before cutting her hair and covering her in paint.

Judith Boylan, 16, was recovering at home yesterday after her ordeal, which marked a return to the IRA paint attacks against Catholic women in the 1970s.

Just before midnight on Wednesday she was abducted by two masked men from a taxi depot in Armagh where she works with her sister. The masked men, who told her they were from the IRA, were joined in the hijacked taxi by three other men armed with iron bars. They drove the teenager to the nationalist Mullacreeve estate where the attack took place.

A resident who tried to help the teenager was chased away but went back to help her when they left.

Miss Boylan said yesterday that she had feared she would be killed. "I didn't know where they were taking me. I thought I was never going to see home again," she said.

Miss Boylan said that the gang had no reason to attack her personally. "They don't like the people I go around with."

Anna Broily, a local Social Democratic and Labour Party councillor, said: "This lassie is going to suffer terribly after this. This is going back to 1972 when all these things went on here. It leaves an awful tension hanging over the community."

The IRA yesterday admitted that it murdered Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick, who was shot by a sniper in Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, earlier this month.



Before the attack

Mullacreeve estate where the attack took place

A resident who tried to help the teenager was chased away but went back to help her when they left

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It leaves an awful tension hanging over the community

The IRA yesterday admitted that it murdered Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick

who was shot by a sniper in Bessbrook, Co. Armagh, earlier this month

Man in court over girl's murder

A 30-year-old man charged with the rape and murder of Kayleigh Ward has been remanded in custody for a week. John O'Shaughnessy, of Blacon, Chester, appeared before magistrates in the city handcuffed to a guard.

No application for bail was made and reporting restrictions were not lifted. Yvonne Ward, 36, the nine-year-old's mother, sat with relatives in the public gallery. The body of her daughter, who disappeared on December 19, was found in the River Dee on Tuesday evening.

Helper at risk

A woman who helped at a fatal accident at Warboys, Cambridgeshire, has been traced by police after medical checks showed that one of those injured in the crash had an infectious disease.

Crèche barrier

Ireland's Revenue Commissioners have suspended plans to impose VAT on crèches after warnings that the tax could undermine childcare services and lead to an increase in unqualified minders.

PC charged

A policeman has appeared before Bedford magistrates charged with stealing seven guns from his station in Luton. PC Geoff Pollard, 49, was bailed to reappear on April 22.

Sex case curate

A curate with a Mohican haircut and the nickname "Daz" admitted indecently assaulting a girl aged 14. The Rev Darren Champ, 36, of St Mary's in Ashford, Kent, will be sentenced on March 27.

Baby's funeral

The funeral is to be held today of a newborn baby boy found drowned in the Thames near Wandsworth Bridge last August. Police appealed for the mother of the baby to come forward.

Lottery ticket ban

A Safeway store in Stamford Hill, north London, has been banned from selling National Lottery tickets after Trading Standards officers found staff selling tickets to underage customers.

Sooty sweep

A punt by Scott Taylor, 21, a scrum half for Basingstoke, in an away rugby league match against Sudbury, sent the ball down the clubhouse chimney. The match went on with the sooty ball.

Defence chief warns of 'satanic UFOs'

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER head of the Armed Forces has helped to form a pressure group to warn of the satanic nature of many unidentified flying objects.

Admiral of the Fleet Lord Hill-Norton, Chief of Defence Staff, 1971-73, is involved with UFO Concern out of worry that some UFO encounters are "definitely antithetical to orthodox Christian belief", according to today's Church Times.

The Rev Paul Ingleby, a sub-deacon in an Orthodox church, who is secretary of UFO Concern, said the truth about UFOs has been suppressed for many years. He had never seen a UFO himself but knew many who had. "It is what they do and the messages that come from them that are anti-Christian, or demonic," a memo about the new group had been sent to the editors of various UFO magazines, and letters of support had been received by, among others, a professor and a prisoner, he added.

Gordon Creighton, a Buddhist who edits Flying Saucer Review, said the group's founders were right to be concerned: "I do believe that the great bulk of these phenomena are what is called satanic."

However, David Wilkinson, a Methodist minister and an astrologist whose Alone in the Universe (Monarch, £7.99) was published this month, told the Church Times that Christians had nothing to fear from alien life forms.

Lord Hill-Norton, 82, confirmed last night that he had helped to found UFO Concern, but declined further comment.

Safer haemophilia therapy

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

ALL patients with haemophilia should be treated with the genetically engineered form of the blood clotting agent Factor VIII, consultants say.

Although it costs more, the recombinant form is safer because it is not made from blood and so cannot transmit viruses. In recent guidelines, the UK Haemophilia Centre Directors Organisation said the recombinant version should be given first to children and other new patients uninfected by viruses if the cost necessitated it being phased in. Use of the older form of Factor VIII, made from blood plasma,

caused thousands of haemophilia sufferers to be infected with HIV and hepatitis C.

Factor VIII is made by pooling blood donations; one infected donation is enough to contaminate a batch. As a result, about 3,000 of this country's 5,000 haemophilia patients are infected with hepatitis C and 1,200 with HIV.

Although Factor VIII made in this way is now made safe with processes designed to destroy all viruses, fears remain that unknown viruses could survive. New hepatitis viruses have been identified, and tomorrow's Lancet reports a

new herpes virus discovered in blood donated by a healthy man in San Francisco.

The Haemophilia Society said: "The whole thrust of the guidelines recommending the recombinant version is to get a treatment for children that gives them a chance to live a life free of infection." For an adult with severe haemophilia having three infusions of 1,000 units a week to prevent bleeding, the new version would cost £73,320 a year compared with £51,480 for the old. Most patients in Britain are given Factor VIII only when they bleed, reducing the cost.

Robert Francis, QC, for the health authorities, told the court that human blood-derived products had "a very good safety record".

Tony Wilson, chief executive of the Haemophilia Society, said the society would continue to petition health authorities and the hospital trust involved to re-examine the ban on funding.

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No one is immune to the deadly dangers of alcohol

THE death from acute alcohol intoxication of Iain Mills, 36, the MP for Meriden, provided a salutary lesson.

Deaths from alcohol poisoning after heavy drinking are not uncommon but more often occur in young people, students for instance, who have been celebrating but have yet to learn the danger of their new-found freedom in the union bar.

A few years ago Paul Knapman, the Westminster Coroner, who presided over Mr Mills's inquest, also returned a misadventure verdict on a journalist who had died from acute alcohol poisoning after attending a press conference. His death and that of Mr Mills, neither of whom were strangers to alcohol, show that anyone can suffer from acute alcohol intoxication.

The alcohol in Mr Mills's case was 400 milligrams in 100 millilitres of blood: five times the legal driving limit. It is assumed that he must have consumed between three quarters and a whole bottle of gin. The Medical Council on Alcoholism suggests that death is possible once the blood alcohol level reaches 400mg, and is to be expected by 600mg.

A pint and a half of beer, or three pub tots of gin, would induce in all those who are not desperately depressed a feeling of cheerfulness and some loss of social inhibitions. The disinhibitory effect is dependent on personality, but by 150mg of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, most drinkers would be over-exuberant, have lost some self-control, and have slurred speech. If their personality was usually argumentative, they would be aggressive and difficult.

The more accustomed someone is to drinking, the higher the blood alcohol level needed to produce symptoms: too great a tolerance to the effects of alcohol can be a sign of over-indulgence.

Drinking ten single whiskeys, or five pints of beer, would accord with a blood level of 150mg; three more whiskeys and the drinker is staggering, seeing double and will find that it is hard to remember the details of the evening the next day. By 400mg the drinker has become a patient, in danger and suffering from sleepiness,

MEDICAL BRIEFING

which soon gives way to coma, oblivion, and as this week's inquest has heard, sometimes death.

The blood levels in women at which the symptoms induced by alcohol start to occur are the same as those for men but, in general, women fare less well than men in relation to the degree of intoxication. Alcohol is absorbed more rapidly and is metabolised by the body less efficiently in women, so that they become drunk faster, and sober up more slowly, particularly during their premenstrual phase.

This disadvantage stems from the different proportions that women have of fat to muscle. If women are short and plump, the effect is even more noticeable.

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

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Blunkett to enlist parents in reading revolution

By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

The drive to give literacy priority in primary schools would be likely to lead to a wholesale revision of the national curriculum. Mr Blunkett said he would not drop entire subjects but wanted to create "elbow room" when the curriculum was revised in 2000.

Book time yesterday at Grafton Primary School, Holloway, north London. Labour would set a 60-minute minimum

The Government responded by accusing Labour of stealing its policies. Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, said: "The work is already being done through Conservative policies that Labour has opposed. Labour in power has shown little regard for literacy, as its record in local governments shows." Unions broadly welcomed the proposals.

Fresh shellfish the catch of the week

Waitrose: British diced steak 340g for £2.29, ground pork 500g for £1.99, green Thai chicken curry

TO OPM WEEKENDS 1981

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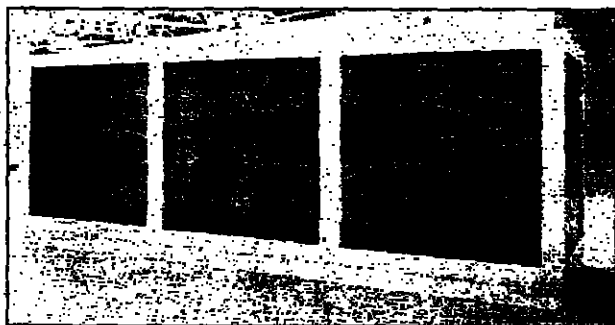
BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A SCULPTURE incorporating nine pints of an artist's blood, a gory image of dismembered limbs and a portrait of the Moors murderer Myra Hindley are to go on show at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

The works by Marc Quinn, the Chapman brothers and Marcus Harvey respectively will be lent by the advertising millionaire Charles Saatchi, who has changed the course of British contemporary art by exhibiting such works at his north London gallery.

For Royal Academicians who fiercely guard the Academy's reputation as a bastion of tradition, and who were dismayed by attempts to revolutionise the Summer Exhibition with avant-garde works, news of a show devoted to such art came as a shock.

The RA was yesterday playing down the controversy, although the very title of the show, *Sensation*, indicates



Damien Hirst's tiger shark will be among exhibits

that it is prepared for criticism. Norman Rosenthal, exhibitions secretary, argued that such works were as shocking, difficult and thought-provoking as Goya's *Disasters of War* and Picasso's *Guernica* were in their day. "Art is good when it perplexes us," he said.

The Academy says that apart from reaching new audiences with a central location, showing the works in a new setting and in different juxtapositions will transform them.

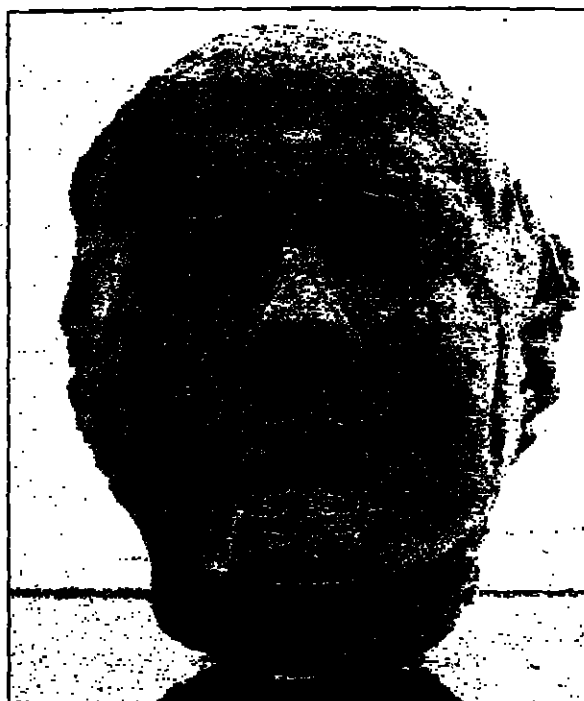
Among the most "difficult" images is Harvey's 11ft Hindley portrait, created from thousands of handprints of two children. Relatives of her victims were outraged when it was exhibited last year at the Saatchi Collection and called for it to be banned. Quinn created his sculpture, called *Self*, by taking a rubber mould of his head and filling it over several months with his blood. The Chapman's mutant mannequins conjure up violent and pornographic imagery.

Another exhibit will be the preserved tiger shark by Damien Hirst, who has upset animal rights campaigners by pickling sheep and cows.

The 30 artists to be featured have been hailed as leading lights of their generation, part of an "explosion of creativity" in the visual arts that has not been seen since the emergence of Pop Art in the 1960s.

However, Peter Coker, a Royal Academician who was considered a wild figure in the 1950s with his "kitchen sink" paintings, said: "I'm very much against the RA going down that path. This has put me off my lunch. It's ghastly. 'I might be criticised for being old-fashioned and backward, but how far forward you can look I don't know. I've become a sheer cynic about these things. I've never seen a Damien Hirst work and I don't want to. I can see a dead sheep in my butcher's'."

Michael Reynolds, a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, said: "It's about three quarters of a

Marc Quinn used his own blood for *Self*, left. Marcus Harvey created *Myra* from children's handprints

century since a lavatory pan was first shown by Duchamp as a work of art. That was the last revolution. These artists are getting on a 70-year-old bandwagon. This is the new establishment throttling anything new that might be coming up." David Lee, editor

of *Art Review*, said: "I can't believe it. This is another endorsement for Saatchi. It increases the value of his holdings, ready for when he wants to offload them. Why should they monopolise a space which has hitherto been dedicated to a different kind of

art? They already monopolise all the publicly funded spaces in London."

However, others were more receptive. Leonard Rosoman, RA, said: "The RA should represent a kind of cross-section of what is going on in London. From that point of

view I'm all for it. People should realise the Academy is no longer just representing one form of painting or sculpture. But it'll upset the traditionalists. It's important that people are upset."

The show runs from September 18 to December 28.

Market keeps a weather eye on master patron

BY DALYA ALBERGE

CHARLES SAATCHI has become Britain's most influential collector of contemporary art. Such is his standing as a patron, he can make or break an artist and his activities are seen as a barometer of the market.

He has such a passion for art that he buys in bulk when he finds an artist he loves. He has been known to snap up as many as 20 works in one go, trusting his eye and relying on gut feeling rather than any professional adviser.

His insatiable appetite was first whetted by a Sol LeWitt drawing he bought in 1970 for £100. In the decades since then, he has introduced British audiences to artists such as Jeff Koons, master of kitsch, Robert Gober, a specialist in conceptual works inspired by Duchamp, and Donald Judd, a minimalist. Damien Hirst, infamous for his presentation of preserved animals, is one of his most famous home-grown discoveries, although Mr Saatchi claims not to have strong

feelings about the nationality of artists he follows.

The art world gets nervous when he sells, questioning his motives and accusing him of being a glorified dealer. Mr Saatchi counters that he does not buy for investment and that tastes change.

He prefers to be out of the limelight and can be perplexed by media interest, once complaining that people wanted to know more about him than the artists he showed. He has talked of wanting to share his enthusiasm for art with the public. His gallery in Boundary Road, St John's Wood, draws tens of thousands of visitors each year and he lends to galleries around the world.

Yesterday Mr Saatchi, who is curating the *Sensation* exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts with Norman Rosenthal, said: "We owe it to this generation of young British artists to make the show as dynamic as possible."

He spoke of his excitement that the works would be seen by a much wider audience than he could hope to attract at the Saatchi Gallery. "One of the major disappointments that I've felt over the years is that Boundary Road has not opened other people's eyes in Britain to the possibility of collecting, as compared with Europe and the States."

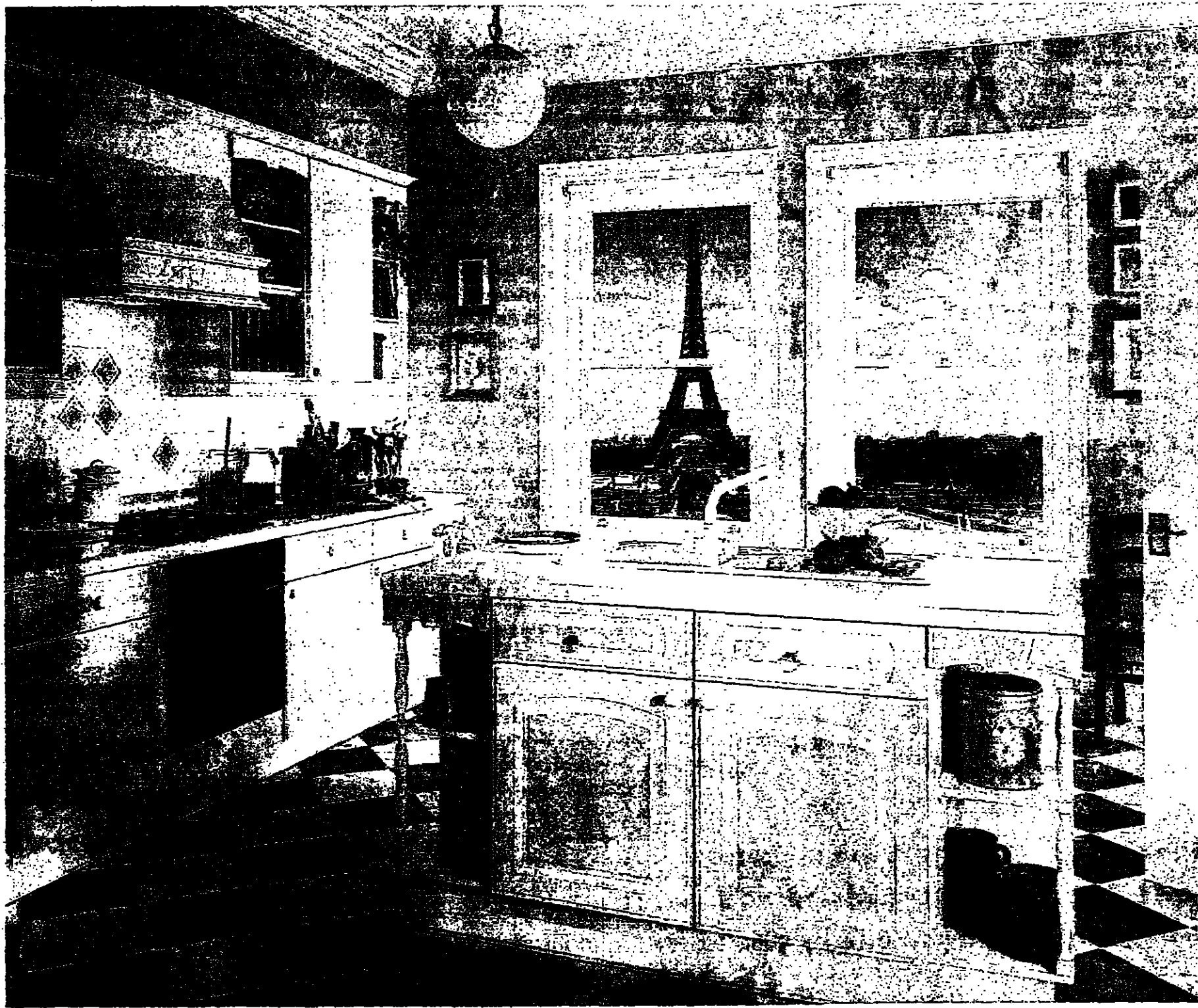
Mr Rosenthal, exhibitions secretary at the Royal Academy, said: "As well as highlighting the vitality and inventiveness of current British art, the exhibition will demonstrate the commitment that Charles Saatchi has shown in collecting the work of these young artists."



Saatchi buys in bulk and relies on gut feeling

Leading article, page 19

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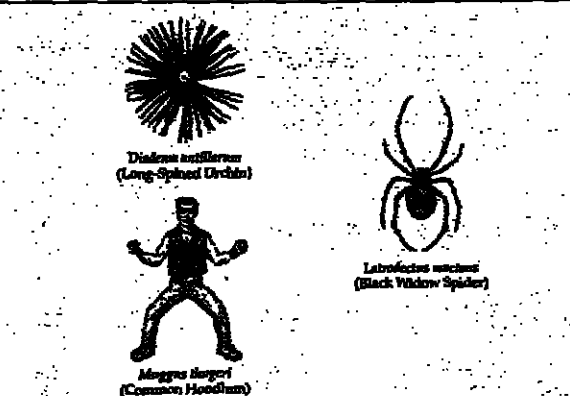
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Poll offers Major small comfort as Labour stays ahead on most key issues

Ray of economic sunlight brightens Tory outlook

BY PETER RIDDELL

THE Tories are persuading more people that they have the best policies for managing the economy, but are lagging well behind Labour on other important issues for the general election, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

The poll, undertaken last weekend, will reinforce Tory claims that they are winning back support on the economy. Among those saying that managing the economy will be very important in helping to decide their vote, 44 per cent say the Tories have the best policies, and 29 per cent Labour. At the end of last March, 34 per cent said Labour, and 31 per cent the Tories.

This change, coupled with the improvement in economic optimism, is the most positive news for the Tories. Among

the public as a whole, the Tory and Labour ratings on managing the economy are almost the same as in 1992.

However, this has been offset by dissatisfaction with the Government's record and a time-for-a-change mood. Moreover, not only is John Major's personal rating less favourable than his was in 1992 or Margaret Thatcher's was in 1983 and 1987, but Tony Blair's rating is far better than those of his predecessors.

Labour is just ahead of the Tories on having the best policies on taxation. This is a big change compared with five years ago, largely because the number saying the Tories have the best policies has fallen sharply. This has resulted in an increasing number of don't knows rather than a rise

in the proportion believing that Labour has the best policies on taxation.

Of the 14 key issues, Labour is ahead on eight: the Tories on five and the Liberal Democrats on one. Moreover, Labour is a very long way in the lead on the three issues rated as most important, healthcare, education and unemployment. The two parties are level-pegging on law and order, a big improvement for Labour since 1992, while the Tories are in the lead on the economy, Europe, Northern Ireland and defence. Labour is also ahead on other social issues such as pensions, housing, transport and trade unions.

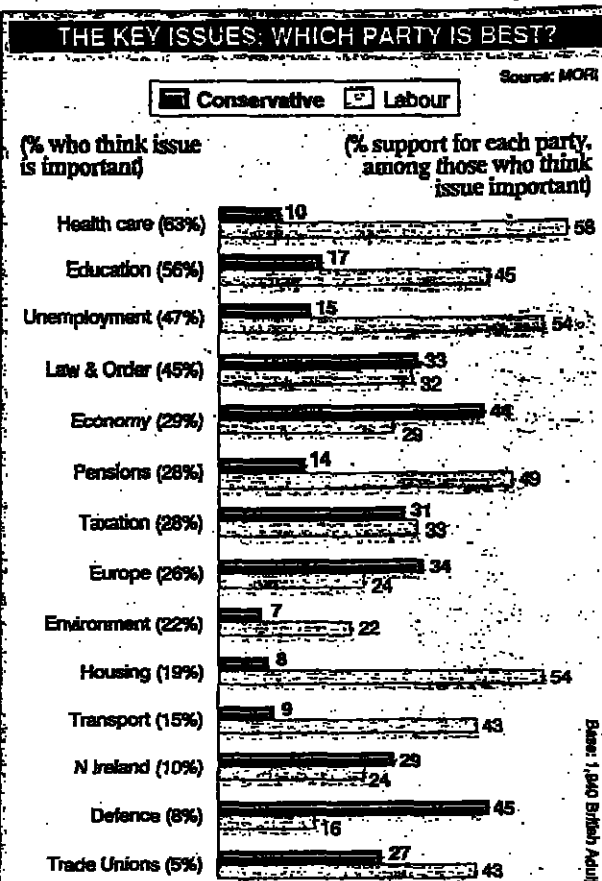
Europe has moved slightly up the rankings of the most important issues, from tenth

to eighth over the past year, among the public as a whole. For Tory loyalists, however, it is the fourth most important, behind health, law and order, and education. But it is only seventh among those who have switched away from the Tories since 1992 and whom the party is trying to win back.

Of those regarding the issue as important, the number regarding the Tories as having the best policies has risen from 31 to 34 per cent over the period. Overall, 63 per cent of Tory loyalists believe that the party has the best policies on Europe, compared with only 18 per cent of those who have deserted the Tories since 1992.

Europe is also important for Liberal Democrat supporters. Some 15 per cent believe that the Tories have the best policies on Europe. The issue is of well above average importance in Tory/Liberal Democrat marginal seats. This suggests that the Tories should emphasise Europe in those parts of the country, such as the South West, where they face a strong Liberal Democrat challenge, since its supporters are more Eurosceptic than the leadership's pro-European stance. The best issue for the Liberal Democrats is protecting the environment, on which they are rated just ahead of Labour.

These findings on which



Why Soames is right to reject resignation call

Nicholas Soames is right not to resign as Armed Forces Minister. The demands for him to do so reflect a complete misunderstanding of ministerial responsibility. Of course, there are circumstances in which a minister should resign, but as the Public Service Committee argued in its report last summer on Ministerial Accountability and Responsibility, "Proper and rigorous scrutiny and accountability may be more important in Parliament's ability to correct error than forcing resignations."

There is no clear pattern. As Geoffrey Howe told the committee, "The question of resignation can hardly be reduced to matters of principle. That may sound a very bizarre thing to say, but so much depends upon the scale of the tragedy, disaster, mistake, on the timing of the disclosure of it." In practice, a resignation has depended on whether a minister loses the support of his or her colleagues, both within the Government and on the back benches.

The idea that there was once a golden age of honour when ministers accepted responsibility for every act of the civil servants in their department is nonsense. It is now accepted that Sir Thomas Dugdale resigned as Minister of Agriculture in 1954 over the Crichton Down case not for this reason but because he lacked backbench support. (This is discussed in *Conservatives and the Constitution*, a thorough study by Andrew Lansley and Richard Wilson published yesterday by the Conservative 2000 Foundation.)

An arcane constitutional debate has developed about what accountability means in practice given that no minister can conceivably know what is being done in his or her name by a civil servant in a vast department. Sir Robin Butler, the Cabinet Secretary, has argued that ministers cannot be held responsible for acts of which they have no knowledge, or cannot be expected to know about, but they remain accountable to Parliament for explaining what has gone wrong and how it will be put right. The Public Service Committee was dubious about the possibility of distinguishing between where a minister is

personally responsible, and liable to take blame, from one in which he is constitutionally accountable. Its report said: "Ministers have an obligation to respond to criticism made in Parliament in a way that seems likely to satisfy it — which may include, if necessary, resignation."

The revised version of *Questions of Procedure for Ministers* states that "ministers must not knowingly mislead Parliament and the public and must correct any inadvertent errors at the earliest opportunity". This is also included in a resolution of accountability which the Public Service Committee has proposed and which, after amendment, the Government has said it will bring to the Commons before the dissolution.

These are the yardsticks by which Mr Soames should be judged. Something very serious has obviously gone wrong at the Ministry of Defence over the use of toxic pesticides during the Gulf war. When Mr Soames learnt last September that he had been misled by officials, he informed the Defence Committee of the true position and in December apologised to the Commons for unwittingly misleading it in a series of answers. There is no reason why Mr Soames should be blamed for the actions of officials which are now, quite properly, being examined in a disciplinary inquiry.

The Defence Committee should be informed of the results. The main question for Mr Soames is whether he could, or should, have taken earlier action to find out what had happened. This is likely to be discussed in the Defence Committee report. However, to demand the immediate resignation of Mr Soames — as David Clark, the Shadow Defence Secretary, has done — is unjustified. Mr Clark has been indulging in the gesture politics of opposition, not behaving as an aspiring minister who hopes to become Defence Secretary nine weeks today.

PETER RIDDELL

Labour councils chief warns of big tax rise

BY JILL SHERMAN

COUNCIL tax bills could rise sharply under a Labour government, one of the party's most senior councillors said yesterday.

Sir Jeremy Beecham, who takes over as chairman of the newly merged Local Government Association from April, also gave warning of tensions between Tony Blair and local authorities if Labour exerts too much central control.

In an interview in yesterday's *New Statesman*, Sir

Jeremy, former leader of Newcastle City Council, said that he would be seeking a much greater degree of local autonomy under a Labour government. "I think at least 50 per cent of council spending should be raised locally. If an authority can demonstrate it is acting responsibly it will be able to carry its local population. That's what local democracy should be about. You simply can't have local democracy with spending levels set by central government."

He went on: "If I was Tony



Beecham: local control

Blair and I wanted a shift in the proportion of money coming from local taxation I would move early: let the councils take the flak. Nobody will increase tax with enthusiasm, but there has been a hell of a lot of damage to services which has to be addressed."

Redwood books his place in election campaign limelight

BY ANDREW PIERCE

THE former Cabinet minister John Redwood is publishing an analysis of the single currency next month that will stimulate the Europe debate in the Tory party on the eve of the general election.

Mr Redwood, who has finalised plans for a tour of the country during the election campaign, will argue in his 80,000-word book that the only way the single currency can work is by judging the Maastricht convergence criteria.

He will use *Our Currency Our Country*, published by Penguin, to launch his high-profile election campaign, organised independently of Conservative Central Office, in which he will speak in 30 constituencies.

The Conservative 2000 Foundation has printed hundreds of leaflets listing ten objections to the single currency. Mr Redwood will distribute them during the campaign, underlining his outright opposition to the single currency in defiance of

the party's wait-and-see policy.

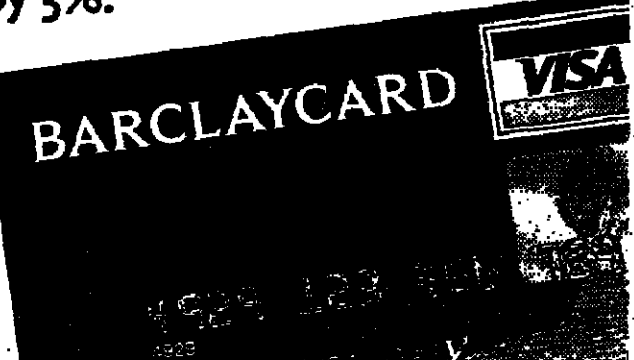
Yesterday he denied that he would be rocking the boat on Europe. He said his book would support the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, whose view was that monetary union could go ahead in 1999 only if other states fudged the convergence criteria. Mr Redwood added: "A single currency would be wrong for Britain and wrong for Europe. Luxembourg is the only country that will qualify by January 1, 1999."

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Army tells Turkish leader to curb Islamic militants

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

A ROOM of angry generals will today warn Necmettin Erbakan, Turkey's pro-Islamic Prime Minister, not to tamper with the secular pro-Western character of the Turkish state.



Demirel: fears army patience wearing thin

The confrontation will take place at a meeting of the country's military-dominated National Security Council, which is expected to pass a resolution urging Mr Erbakan to crack down on Turkish Islamic militancy, including hotheads in his Welfare Party.

Although the move is purely advisory, it will be one the Prime Minister ignores at his peril. Mr Erbakan's previous political party was among those disbanded when the military staged a coup in September 1980. Then he was banned from political life for seven years.

"The meeting is going to be tough and it's going to be nasty," said a close aide to Suleyman Demirel, who as Turkish President chairs the security council. Mr Demirel, himself unseated as Prime Minister twice by the military, has given in to outspoken interviews making clear his fears that the military's patience is wearing thin. Earlier in the week he indicated he would call for general elections if his office had the

power to dissolve parliament. He also gave a warning that any party campaigning on religious principles could be banned under the terms of the constitution.

"If someone keeps asking for a beating, they are bound to get one," Mr Demirel told the daily *Yeni Yuz Yil*, a remark aimed not just at the Government but at a badly divided Opposition which appeared to prefer exploiting tensions with the army to unity. That opposition role now appears to have fallen to the military, which stepped out of its barracks just over a month ago. Tanks paraded through the streets of Sincan, outside Ankara, whose radical Islamic Mayor had staged an anti-Israel, pro-Sharia-law meeting addressed by the Iranian Ambassador. Although the military said the exercises were planned, few doubted it was a way for the generals to show displeasure.



Necmettin Erbakan is proud of his record in office but is under strong pressure to ditch his radical colleagues

Modern opinion in Turkey was outraged at the sight, repeated over and over on private television stations, of a former bodyguard of the Sincan Mayor slapping a woman reporter to the ground. The nightmare of being bounded into an Islamic regime prompted a march by secular-minded women on the capital this month.

Public opinion has also been alarmed at reports of large sales of pump-action rifles in pro-Welfare parts of the country and of the sight of Welfare supporters in the town of Kayseri wearing paramilitary uniforms.

Mr Erbakan yesterday appeared unrepentant over his Government's record which, he said, included lowering interest rates and keeping the economy on an even keel. He described as "secular fascism" a brand of thought that refused to allow civil liberties to practising Muslims.

The Prime Minister is coming under increasing pressure to jettison some of his more radical colleagues. Many commentators believe he would like to steer his party into the political centre, but is unable to abandon a confrontational style that served him through 30 years of political opposition.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Orchestra to admit women

Vienna: After months of pressure from leading cultural figures and the Austrian Government, one of the last male-only orchestras in the world, voted yesterday to admit women.

The decision came after a four-hour meeting of the Philharmonic's musicians, most of whom also form the orchestra of the famed Vienna State Opera. The decision to admit women applies to both orchestras. (AP)

Woman jailed

Delhi: A court here sentenced a Spanish woman of 73 to 10 years' hard labour for trying to smuggle 24lb of heroin out of the country. Ruiz Guerrero Dolores had been held almost 18 months awaiting trial. (AFP)

Golden gait

Cairo: A smuggler was arrested by Egyptian customs officials who were alerted by his strange walk — he was weighed down with a belt made of 26lbs in gold bars, airport officials said. (AFP)

Greece threatens veto if EU talks to Turkish Cypriots

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

GREECE has given its European Union partners a sharp warning that it might veto the accession of all new east European entrants if EU officials insisted on including Turkish Cypriots in talks on the island's accession.

Greece was isolated earlier this week when its EU partners, led by Britain and Germany, insisted that the Turkish Cypriots would have to be consulted at some stage during the talks, due to begin at the end of this year.

In an angry reaction Theodoros Pangalos, the Greek Foreign Minister, said the EU would pay a price for such a move. Athens and Nicosia insist that there should be no talks or negotiations that implied any recognition of the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is not recognised by any country except Turkey.

Mr Pangalos called the stance by Britain and Germany "criminal and foolish". He refused to agree a text for a scheduled meeting between Cyprus and the EU, and it was therefore scrapped.

The Dutch, currently holding the EU presidency, said on Wednesday that it would be politically and physically impossible to admit Cyprus without progress towards healing the island's division. The message was reinforced by Hans Van Den Broek, the EU External Affairs Commissioner responsible for enlargement, who said Brussels wanted the Turkish Cypriots to take part in the talks.

The row blew up as Sir David Hannay, Britain's special envoy to Cyprus, was having talks in Athens and Ankara. Britain insists that

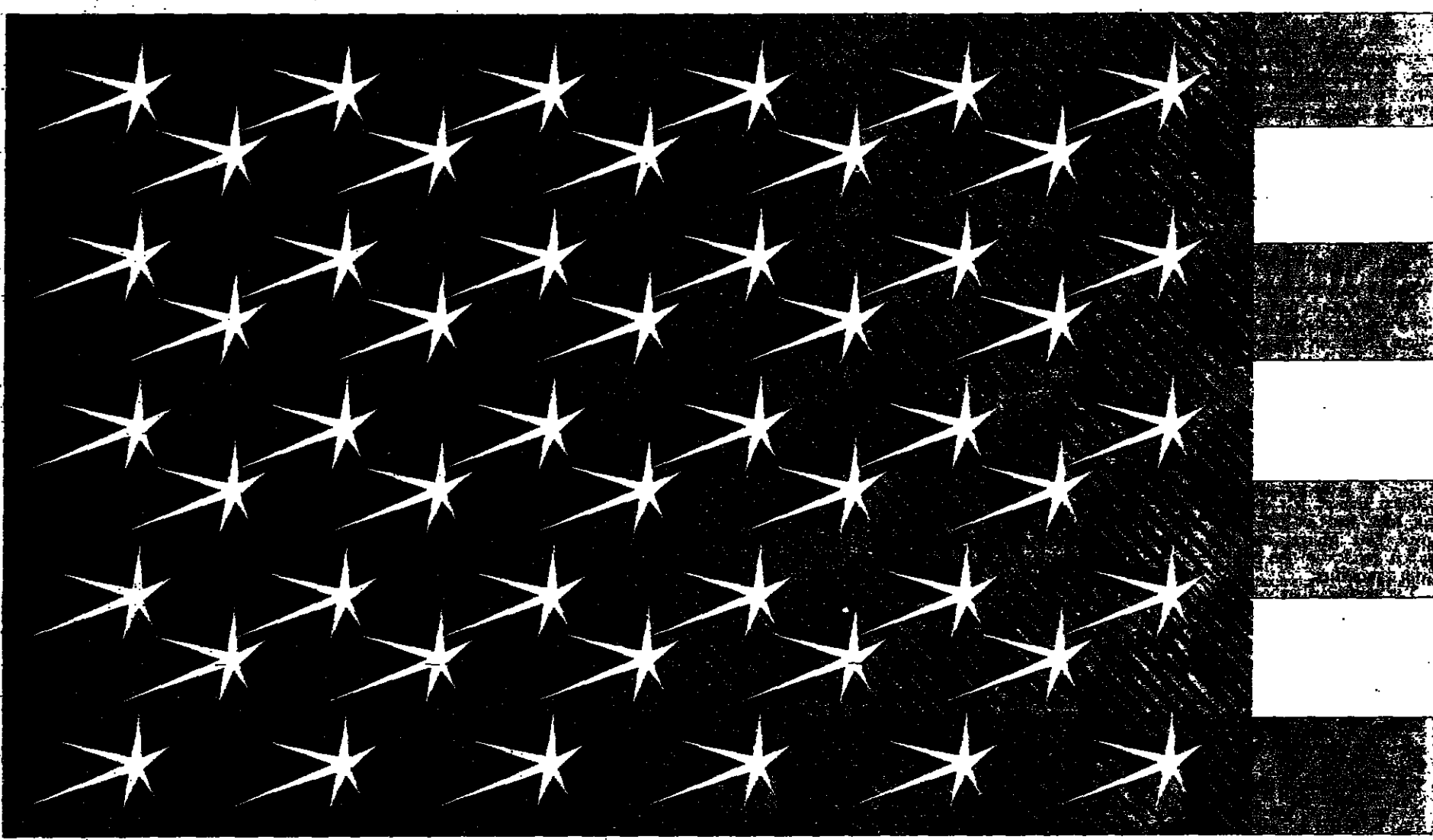
substantial progress in finding a political solution for Cyprus must be made this year. However, after recent violence on the Green Line and heightened tension between Greece and Turkey, the two sides are now further apart than ever. Sir David will return to Cyprus on March 11.

Britain, one of the guarantor powers in Cyprus, has reacted angrily to Greek intransigence. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, made clear that there was no question of admitting only the southern half of the island. He also said that the EU negotiations should, in themselves, speed a resolution; face-to-face talks ought to begin in the next few months.

"At the end of the day, we do want to see a situation where all Cypriots are able to participate in the accession negotiations," he said. Britain had "no intention" of recognising the breakaway Turkish Cypriot state, but he made clear that only a united Cyprus could be admitted as a full member of the EU.

The row could pose a big threat to two vital EU interests: enlargement to the east, and the customs union between the EU and Turkey. Greece is already blocking EU funds aimed at offsetting Turkey's loss of revenue from tariffs lifted under the customs union. And if Athens refuses to ratify the accession of new members from central and eastern Europe, no expansion can take place at all.

Turkey, in turn, has threatened to veto the expansion of Nato if EU funds for Ankara are still blocked. The Turks say that there is a clear link between economic and security issues.



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Scrawled note speaks volumes about White House finance scandal



Clinton: ex-aide predicts "a lot of trouble" ahead

FROM TOM RHODES
IN WASHINGTON

WITH a single flourish of his presidential pen, Bill Clinton has transformed a hazy story of shady characters and Asian money into a fundraising scandal that every American can understand.

The scrawled approval for the use of the Lincoln bedroom and other White House attractions to raise funds for his re-election has placed the President firmly at the heart of an operation that even his closest defenders find difficult to justify. George Stephanopoulos, the former Clinton aide, is just one who has swiftly acknowledged the damage of

these latest disclosures which he says will cause "a lot of trouble over this year for the President".

Firm critics are more forthright. "The Lincoln bedroom is a national treasure. This is going to lead to more outrage at the system," said Jennifer Lamson of the grassroots lobby group, Common Cause.

An early poll published yesterday by USA Today indicated that the public is deeply cynical in its assumption that politicians from both parties are corrupt and that money is the inevitable vehicle for access to the system. Mr Clinton's

personal involvement is likely to erode his current approval rating of 60 per cent, the highest since he has been in office.

But there is a deeper legal strand to the case which has greater potential to undermine Mr Clinton's position in the Oval Office, a fact that Harold Ickes, the former deputy chief of staff, has so obviously exploited in his release of the documents. For months, the White House has denied that there was any price tag for spending the night at the White House, taking a flight on Air Force One, sipping coffee

with the President in the Map Room or for a round of golf or a jog with Mr Clinton.

In spite of the President's insistence that no one was actually promised anything in return for money, there seems no doubt that the White House was used as little more than a Democratic contributors' holiday camp in which donors such as Steven Spielberg, the film director and producer, and Barbara Streisand, the singer and actress, could write a cheque for bed and breakfast. The White House says that Mr Clinton's actions were no different from those of past presidents, both Democratic and Republican. But no chief executive since

Richard Nixon has been so closely involved in the complexities of his re-election campaign.

Mr Clinton presided over an operation that may have crossed the legal barriers which are certain to be closely examined by the Justice Department and must place even greater pressure on Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, to appoint an independent prosecutor to investigate. Under American law it is illegal to solicit campaign contributions on federal property, including the offices of the White House. The congressional inquiries into the fundraising scandal, which have become the scourge of Mr Clinton's second term, must also determine

whether American policy and influence was in some way sold to the highest bidder.

The White House insists it was vanity rather than any wish to influence policy that drew so many to contribute to the Democratic cause in exchange for "face time" with the President. The fact remains that the Clinton campaign has already returned more than \$1 million (\$613,500) in funds received from illegal sources.

The President's own national security staff saw little difficulty in permitting access to a number of people with close links to the Chinese administration, including an arms dealer from Beijing.

President's sacked aide spilt beans on sleepover perk

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

AS the FBI broadened its investigations into President Clinton's fundraising debacle yesterday, the most asked question in Washington was why one of his oldest allies had spilt the beans.

The shoal of documents disclosing Mr Clinton's eagerness to reward big campaign contributors with overnight stays in the Lincoln bedroom and other White House perks came from Harold Ickes, the President's former deputy chief of staff. Mr Ickes was dumped by Mr Clinton in the wake of last November's election, after a friendship of 25 years, at the insistence of Erskine Bowles, the new White House chief of staff.

Mr Ickes made no secret to friends and colleagues of his anger about the way he had been treated by Mr Clinton after working tirelessly for his re-election. He learnt of his dismissal from a newspaper account that said he was too liberal to work with Republicans in the President's second term. Mr Ickes felt that Mr Clinton showed less concern for him than for his bitter rival, Dick Morris, the disgraced political adviser caught with a prostitute.

The unexpected appearance now of the Ickes files, confirming how consumed the White House had been with raising money, gives rise to wide-

spread speculation that Mr Ickes has exacted his revenge by following Washington's vintage political maxim of "don't get mad, get even".

Mr Ickes, a hardboiled New York lawyer, denied any such motive. "The President is my friend," he told *The Washington Post*. "I have enormous respect and regard for him." It had been an honour to work for him and still was — Mr Ickes has the consolation prize of organising the Group of Seven summit in Denver in June.

Nonetheless, when Mr Ickes turned over his files last week at the request of congressional investigators, he did not seek White House permission. He simply told Clinton aides and gave them copies. The aides then rushed them out, putting their spin on them, before they leaked from Capitol Hill.

Mr Ickes argued that the documents contained "titillating stuff" about money-raising but disclosed nothing improper done by Mr Clinton. "A huge amount of smoke but no fire," Mr Ickes said. As for his own role, he admitted making a bad mistake in faxing instructions on how to obtain a tax deduction to a donor who was offering a gift of \$5 million (\$3 million). While headlines continued over the "beds-for-bucks"

scheme, the FBI expanded its inquiries into the more serious issue of foreign influence in Democratic fundraising exerted by China and other Asian countries which hoped thereby to influence White House policies.

Louis Freeh, FBI Director, briefed senators on potential involvement by China, a finding that could lead to his requesting the appointment of an independent counsel. However, Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, repeated at a congressional hearing on the affair that she had not seen enough evidence to justify such an appointment.

A key figure in the investigation is Pauline Kanchanalak, a big Democratic contributor who runs the private US-Thailand Business Council. She took five business figures to coffee with Mr Clinton on the day she donated \$135,000. They included the top two executives of CP Group, a Thai conglomerate that has extensive business interests in China.

A federal grand jury in Washington has begun secret hearings with evidence from Rawlin Soberano of an Asian-American business association. He said that John Huang, the Democrats' chief Asian fundraiser, had asked him to launder money illegally into the Clinton campaign.



Hillary Clinton accepts her non-music Grammy award for the recording of her book *It Takes a Village*. She joked that it was the first time a tone-deaf person had won



Britain's Eric Clapton, who won three Grammys, and Sheryl Crow at the New York awards ceremony

Hillary Clinton and ancient Britons scoop Grammys

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

ANCIENT Brits and Americans — living and dead — did well in the 1997 Grammys, pop music's answer to the Oscars.

On a night which saw awards for the First Lady, the late Nat "King" Cole and the veteran Tony Bennett, there were prizes for The Beatles, for *Free as a Bird*, their 1996 song featuring material from the late John Lennon, and three for Eric Clapton for *Change the World*.

The oldesters' awards won respectful applause from the young things at New York's Madison Square Gardens, who clapped as if at a county cricket match.

Bryn Terfel, the Welsh baritone, landed the classical vocalist Grammy for a collection of arias, *The Bourne*, the Symphony Orchestra and the Wayfaring Singers won in the best choral album category.

In a, shameless publicity stunt, the Grammys gave a prize to Hillary Clinton for the recording she made of her book of cosy liberal orthodoxy, *It Takes a Village*.

When country singer LeAnn Rimes, 14, won the best new artist Grammy she could barely speak for her sobs.

Best single, Eric Clapton, *Change the World*; best album, Celine Dion, *Falling into You*; best male vocalist, Eric Clapton; best female vocalist, Toni Braxton, *Unbreak My Heart*; best pop collaboration, Nat Cole and his daughter Natalie, *When I fall in Love*; best traditional pop album, Tony Bennett, *Here's to the Ladies*; best rock album, Sheryl Crow, *Sheryl Crow*; best pop group, The Beatles, *Free as a Bird*; best contemporary folk album, Bruce Springsteen, *The Ghost of Tom Joad*.

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Sleaze allegations grow as French TV chief is charged

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

FRANCE'S leading television station, TF1, was caught up in corruption allegations yesterday as its chairman was charged with misuse of corporate funds.

In the latest sleaze scandal to hit French public life, Patrick Le Lay was questioned at length by the Versailles-based magistrate, Jean-Marie Chappier, who is investigating claims that TF1 diverted money into a secret fund.

M. Le Lay was charged along with one of France's leading industrialists, Martin Bouygues, chairman of the construction group, Bouygues, which owns TF1.

The accusations will fuel the suspicion, shared by many French people, that the country's elite is untrustworthy and incompetent. The claims follow a long list of corruption allegations against leading politicians, media figures and industrialists.

M. Chappier suspects that Bouygues companies paid up to Fr5 million (£550,000) into Cerial, a fictitious consultancy, run by Jacques Dupuydauby, the company's former vice-chairman, between 1987 and 1993. It is not known what the secret fund was used for but there has been press speculation that it went to political parties.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s it was commonplace for leading French firms to make clandestine donations to political parties in the hope — usually fulfilled — of receiving



Bouygues: his company owns television station

favours in return. France has since adopted strict laws designed to limit political financing, although many analysts believe that the parties still manage to get around them.

There have also been suggestions in the media that Bouygues used Cerial to win business contracts with under-the-table payments. At least some of the Fr5 million was channelled into an account in Madrid. Both M. Le Lay and M. Bouygues deny the charges, saying they knew nothing of the funds paid to Cerial.

The affair is embarrassing for Bouygues, a household name in France, which employs 70,000 people, and for its most prominent subsidiary, TF1. But it is certain to be welcomed by the extreme right-wing National Front, which owes its electoral success in part to its claims that

France's rulers are "all corrupt".

The extremist movement tells its white working class electorate that they are the victims of an egotistical elite preoccupied with making money, promoting foreign interests and hiding the truth. "The television lies", is the slogan on one of the Front's posters.

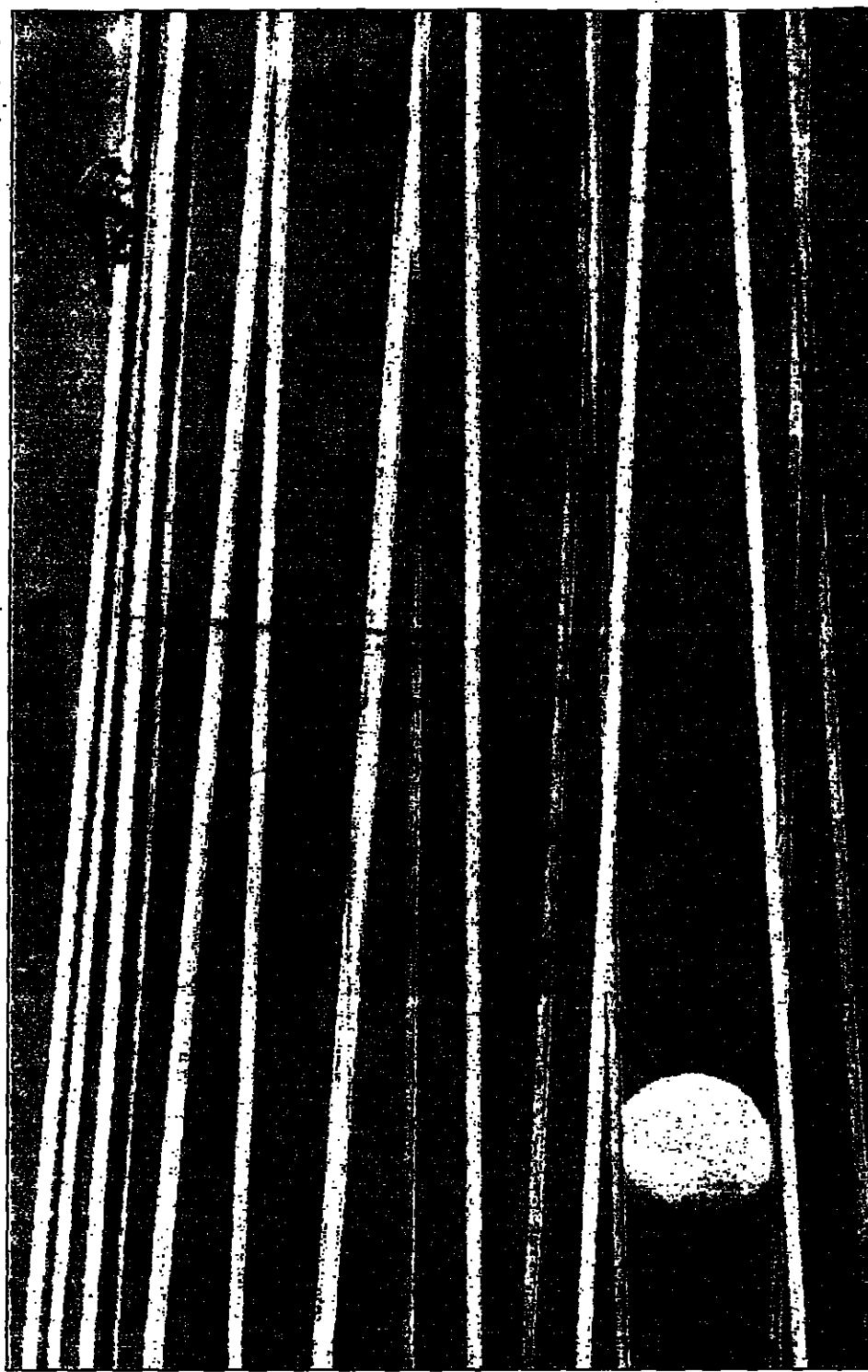
TF1, an independent channel, dominates French television, consistently winning bigger audiences than its publicly-owned rivals, France 2 and France 3.

This is not the first time it has been in legal trouble. Two years ago M. Le Lay was questioned over claims that his station bribed officials to be allowed to broadcast the national lottery results. He was released without charge.

M. Bouygues was charged with the misuse of corporate funds in 1995 in connection with an investigation into political financing.

Patrick Poivre, d'Arvor, TF1's best-known news presenter, was found guilty last year of receiving illegal funds after an inquiry into the same affair.

□ Marseilles: A court yesterday refused to grant Bernard Tapie, the bankrupt businessman and former football boss, day release from prison, wrecking his attempt to star in a second film. Tapie appeared last year in Claude Lelouch's *Hommes Femmes: Mode d'Emploi*. (Reuters)



The moon shows through the cables on Sydney's Centrepoint as Alain Robert climbs



The climber, circled

Swoop by police foils daredevil climber

FROM REUTER IN SYDNEY

A FRENCH "spiderman" who has climbed some of the world's tallest structures — including London's Canary Wharf tower — was caught in a police web yesterday half way up Sydney's Centrepoint Tower.

Alain Robert, 34, a rock climber from southern France, crawled up the tower's twisted outer cables soon after dawn. But as a police helicopter circled overhead, he was nabbed as he passed a maintenance platform halfway up the 1,066ft tower, Australia's tallest building.

Police handcuffed him and took him away. He is to appear in court today charged with illegally climbing a building.

M. Robert has scaled high buildings around the world, including the Eiffel Tower, the Golden Gate Bridge and Hong Kong's Far East Finance Centre. He is regularly arrested and fined.



Spectators look up to the "spiderman" as he heads towards arrest halfway up Australia's tallest tower

7,000 mourn murder victims

BY ADAM SAGE

ALAIN JUPPÉ, the French Prime Minister, was among 7,000 mourners yesterday at the funeral for four young women murdered in northern France this month. President Chirac sent a wreath.

The ceremony brought the women's home town of Boulogne to a standstill. Shops closed, children stood for a minute's silence and local people stopped work to pay

their last respects to Isabelle Ruffin, 20, her sister Amélie, 17, Peggy Merlin, 20, and her sister Audrey, 17.

The four were kidnapped, beaten, raped and murdered after an evening at a carnival two weeks ago. Their bodies were discovered last Friday, buried a beach near Boulogne.

Two scrap-iron merchants recently released from prison, Jean-Michel Jourdain, 34, and his brother Jean-Louis, 38, have been charged with the

murders. They deny the allegations, each saying the other was responsible.

As details of the women's ordeal have been disclosed, there have been protest marches and petitions calling for a return of the death penalty. Yesterday, however, mourners respected a call for calm from Laure Lamotte, adoptive mother of the Ruffin sisters. "I want reflection and prayer worthy of the girls," she said.

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For your...

When fashion designers' parties are the measure of a capital's cool



Naomi Campbell with Joaquim Cortes at the Miu Miu party, which was held at The Naval and Military Club in Piccadilly during London Fashion Week



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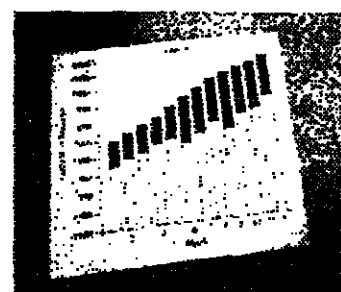
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Exhausted and all partied out — at the end of London Fashion Week, Style Editor Grace Bradberry finds designers just want to have fun

Ever since *Newsweek* produced their "Cool Britannia" issue, London's resurgence as a fashion capital has been a media fact.

This month's *Vanity Fair* runs home the message with the original strapline "London Swings Again" below a picture of Patsy Kensit in a black bra, and Liam Gallagher, swathed in a Union Jack and showing off his armpits.

But no matter how much hyperbole enters the headlines, nor how outlandish the venue for Alexander McQueen's catwalk show, there can only be one true barometer of a capital's cool — the parties.

The pace was set last season by the American designer Donna Karan, who blew half a million pounds, converting a Shepherd's Bush warehouse into the sort of place Karan would choose to live — all monotone Moroccan, with hundreds of candles and cream floor cushions.

But there has been nothing much since. The opening of Calvin Klein's Bond Street store is still months away, and Versace's Rock And Royal party, which might have upstaged anything in London Fashion Week, was abandoned when Diana, Princess of Wales, took umbrage at the contents of the accompanying book, for which she had written a foreword, and refused to attend.

Many in the fashion world will have breathed a sigh of relief that Versace's £100-a-ticket bash was cancelled. Not only is Versace renowned for throwing thoroughly tacky parties, but they might also have been forced to pay — and there is nothing that industry insiders loathe more.

The perfect party in the eyes of the fashion world was probably that thrown by Donna Karan. She carefully delineated the status of its members, inviting "front row" fashion editors to an intimate dinner for 300, where they could mingle with celebrities and supermodels, before 500 of their less distinguished peers were allowed in for the after-dinner party.

By contrast, the Miu Miu party on Sunday, which was the event of London Fashion Week, was superficially a democratic affair. The host, Miuccia Prada, was once a member of the Italian Communist Party, and is what counts in fashion as an "intellectual". She is famous for leading the move away from obvious status symbols — the gold-chained Chanel handbag — to less obvious ones — her own black nylon bags, bearing a discreet but instantly recognisable triangle logo.

Her party for 1,000, held at The In and Out Club (The Naval and Military Club) in Piccadilly, was planned as the very antithesis of a Versace bash. The theme was a debutante's first party — though how many debutantes' parents are now prepared to spend £200,000 moving in antique furniture, planting ivy in the courtyard and flying a cocktail

mixer in from New York is questionable.

About 600 of the guests were from the fashion industry. Vivienne Westwood, whose show had preceded Miu Miu, looked especially kooky, having robbed Prada of publicity by using 13-year-olds on the catwalk. The shoe designer Patrick Cox was there, as was Selina Blow, wearing one of her own velvet coats.

The remaining 400 guests were friends of Miuccia — a gaggle of Italians who made their way swiftly to the restaurant — and assorted hip people drawn largely from the film and music industries. Naomi Campbell arrived with her current boyfriend, the flamenco dancer Josquim Cortes, and again disappeared into the restaurant where she dined with Miuccia.

Indeed, as celebrities arrived, they just as soon disappeared into the dining room. It was only when lower tier guests tried to penetrate this inner sanctum that the flawed nature of democracy became clear. Anxious to please the VIPs, the maître d', borrowed from the London restaurant Quo Vadis, turned most others

'Fashion parties should chill out — I don't mean with drugs or alcohol — people should loosen up and talk to each other'

away, suggesting they return after midnight on the off-chance that a table might become free.

Later in the evening, the Prada team themselves became victims of celebrity tantrum when The Artist Formerly Known As Prince settled into the red smoking-room, surrounded himself with bodyguards, and refused to let any of them come near.

This, and the impossibility of securing a table, provided ample topics of conversation when alternative topics — was that Damien Hirst? (it was); had the McQueen ticket arrived yet? (it hadn't); had the dress been bought at discount or cost price? (no industry insider ever pays the full whack) — had been exhausted.

Conversation was aided by the huge supply of alcohol. This was not an event at which to order spritzers. Instead, the evening virtually swam in Louis Roederer champagne, washed down with pink Litchfield gin, Mai Tais and Bourbon Sours. Upstairs, just before the dancefloor (fury fashion people don't dance), was the cocktail bar, manned by Eugene, flown in specially from the Prada bar in New York. The speciality was something called Carol Channing (Mad About Millie), vodka-based, like all Eugene's cocktails, mixed with raspberry,

which would appear to be the new cranberry juice.

Contrary to what you might think, it is not the done thing to wear Miu Miu to the Miu Miu party. As one fashion editor remarked: "If you must wear the designer's clothes, at least make it the main line."

Instead, guests wore Dolce & Gabbana — rose-print slip dresses over coloured bras — mainline Prada — one guest wore a Chinese print jacket and skirt, exactly as it was shown on the catwalk — or anonymous black or grey slip dresses, whose origins would be recognisable only to the cognoscenti.

Just in case anyone might fail to recognise her, Tara Palmer-Tomkinson wore her trademark black dress with the cutaway front, as seen at the head of her *Sunday Times* column. She wore it again on Tuesday night to shoe designer Jimmy Choo's soiree at the Wellington Club, in Knightsbridge.

Held on the same night as the Antonio Berardi show, the Berardi party, another bash thrown by the Spanish designer Amaya Arzuaga, and the opening of the Antonio Lopez show at the Royal College of Art, Jimmy's party faced some pretty stiff competition.

Tamara Beckwith was one of the few to wear Choo's shoes — Tara and her friend Lucy Sykes, a stylist in New York, confessed that they had meant to borrow some but had been too disorganised.

Mandy Smith, who had arrived from the Jerry Maguire premiere, declared that wearing the designer's own label was "naïf", before adding that she had preferred the previous party: "Fashion parties should chill out and I don't mean with drugs and alcohol — people should loosen up and talk to each other."

But conversation takes time, and those who really count often don't stay long. Helena Christensen, who modelled in the Antonio Berardi show, was barely at his party in Legends nightclub, Mayfair, long enough to kiss a few make-up artists. But then, the Berardi party was not a classic fashion event — after the first free brandy the designer is sponsored by Courvoisier you actually had to pay for drinks. A tonic water alone cost £1.80, a bottle of house wine £14.

And so the week goes on. On Wednesday night the Irish designer John Rocha threw a party, last night Jasper Courran held a small soiree for his friends. Tonight *Vogue* rounds off the week with a large bash at Nobu, in the fashion crowd's favourite new hotel, The Metropolitan on Old Park Lane. It is an event — only for the brave, with a dress code that states, unequivocally, "glamorous".

But then if Britain's most influential fashion magazine is to support the British fashion industry, it could do worse than create a desperate need for dresses that would have no place in any other walk of life.

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Sam Mendes on directing, learnt by experience and observation: "It combines amateur psychology, sports coaching, visual art. You become an intellectual and visual magpie"

Theatre's hot ticket

It is tempting to see Sam Mendes, the theatre's blue-eyed wunderkind, as the bachelor thirty-something hero of *Company*, the Stephen Sondheim musical he directed, to be televised in *Performance* on BBC2 tomorrow night who observes his married friends and reflects on the difficulty of commitment, and his own loneliness. Mendes has no aversion to marriage, but has avoided it so far. When he and Jane Horrocks were an item, and I interviewed Jane, she said: "Do we have to talk about Sam?" Not the words of an imminent bride, I thought. That is now over, but they remain good friends.

It would be hard not to be friends with Sam, a young man (31) full of charm and quick intelligence. His meteoric success cannot be due entirely to luck, steady ambition or even talent: he is good with people, too. The name Mendes is Portuguese. His forefathers sailed to Trinidad in a banana boat from Madeira, and his grandfather, the novelist Alfred Mendes, started the literary magazine *The Beacon* with V. S. Naipaul and C. R. James. Alfred, educated at the Quaker Friends' School in Saffron Walden, was a character, a carouser, a raconteur, a womaniser. Sam, browsing with his father in a second-hand bookshop once, found, in

Sam Mendes is young, sexy, and already one of our most accomplished theatre directors, but from the beginning he has made his own luck

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



Owen Rutter's *If Crab No Walk A Traveller in the West Indies*, seven pages on his grandfather who, Rutter said, "introduced me to every brothel in Port of Spain". "He was still the same at 80," Sam says. When Sam was 14, his mother took him from Oxford, where he attended Magdalen College School, to Stratford to see his O-level set text, *The Merchant of Venice* with David Suchet. His mother says he never spoke to her at all that day. "I was uncomfortable at 14, an only child out at the theatre with my mother, having to wear a tie, the badge of slavery." Later he sat on the floor at The Other Place,

captivated by Helen Mirren as Cleopatra in her excitingly diaphanous gown. "The theatre became a stabilising influence in a rather unstable childhood." (His parents divorced when he was five.)

But young Sam fixed his own luck: in his gap year he worked at the Gogginheim in Venice, but by the time he arrived at Peterhouse, Cambridge (the very view-wearing college) he'd switched to English. He put on a college production of a David Halliwell play and knew by day one of rehearsals that directing would be his game.

Having graduated with a first, he was given a job at Chichester by John Gage, gratefully mopping the stage for £50 a week and being allowed to direct Chekhov's *Swansong* and the Bear and *The Marriage Proposal*, for one night only. "I tried so hard to make it work, I kept the cast at it way into the night." Rave reviews ensued. Gage gave him, at 23, the newly built Minerva Theatre to play with.

So he became "this wonderful new young chap Sam Mendes". He did *London Assurance* with Paul Eddington, *The Cherry Orchard* with Judi Dench — casting people he had worshipped on television. He directed *Kean* with Derek Jacobi, Ralph Fiennes and Amanda Root in *Titus* and *Cressida* for the RSC. Then along came *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice*.

This quirky conception sprang from Jane Horrocks's gift for impersonating singers in a voice that erupted unerringly from a flat-chested waif. Michael Codron sent Jim Cartwright's embryo script to Mendes: rehearsals were chaotic, as the play was written while they worked, and

Mendes says it was difficult to rein in. It remains — though about 20 minutes too long — one of those unforgettable theatrical events of the 1990s.

"I first met Jane in the form of a cassette tape. 'Hello Sam,' (he mimics Jane Horrocks's broad Lancashire). 'This is my tape. Here's Judy Garland... This is Billie Holiday... Piaf... Gracie Fields.' Laughing the whole time." They had supper in this very restaurant (the Mezzanine at the National) and after "circling round each other warily" were a couple by the time he directed her as Sally Bowles in *Cabaret*. They never shared a home, but Mendes took Jane to Trinidad to meet his relations and she took him to Raventhorpe, Lancashire, to meet hers. It was not such a culture shock: he'd lived in Manchester when his father taught English at the university, and his stepmother is a Mancunian. But the two were chalk and cheese. Jane Horrocks is not really like Ab Fab's Bubble, but she is no great reader, while Sam's cottage, a former almshouse near Oxford, is lined with books.

He bought that after going commercial: he makes "absurd" sums of money from his long-running *Oliver!* at the Palladium. On the other hand, in his mid-twenties he directed at three of the country's major companies (the National, the RSC and the Young Vic) in one year for a total of £15,000. There is a mystique about the bizarre craft of directing. It is invisible but noticeable, and cannot be taught except by experience and observation.

"It combines amateur psychology, sports coaching, visual art. You become an intellectual and visual magpie." For *The Glass Menagerie* he got deep into prewar New Orleans. I left him browsing through an American academic's thesis on racism in *Othello*. His *Othello* (for "Othello" as the BBC's handout has it) will open at the National in September.

Directing is both a solitary and a sociable life. "But I'm a team player," he says. I am told he wields a useful bat for The Gaieties, Harold Pinter's cricket team. He is also conscious of the "ultimate vanity"

'I'd have been spat out at 45, blinking in the sunlight'

of acting. "Would you be an actor? That neurotic, paranoia-inducing profession?" But he acknowledges that a first night has the emotional impact of a car crash. "Even I, sitting in the bar nursing my drink, am paralysed with fear, and I'm not even on the stage."

Sam Mendes and the Donmar, named after Donald Albery and Margot Fonteyn and known as "the sexiest space in London", are now an institution. He has become one of the new Labour entrepreneurs, grateful for Arts Council grants but also adept at wooing private funding. "You know the Tories, the most destructive influence on the arts, have been in power since I was 14? I pray Labour gets in." He commissions new work, but "unless the material is better than you, it's not worth working on", and says it is one thing to visualise a historical period on stage, but quite another to imagine and reinvent it from the inside — as novelists such as Barry Unsworth, Patrick Susskind,

and the new bestseller Andrew Miller can. Mendes's next show will be a musical, *The Fix*, a dark political comedy from New York: expect more House Full boards to go up.

Meanwhile tomorrow night viewers can see, on BBC2, the Donmar production of *Company*, one of last year's hot tickets with its haunting songs (Barcelona, Little Things We Do Together, Not Getting Married Today etc). It will be followed, on Saturday night, by Kevin Elyot's *My Night With Richard II*, Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*.

Puritans recall the idea of televising theatrical productions. But doesn't it make sense? In New York, the Museum of Modern Art keeps an archive of such tapes — and would not posterity love to see Garrick, or Ellen Terry, or Gielgud's Hamlet on stage?

Besides, having often paid £100 for my family to see a play about which the critics have been all too kind, I wish that we had watched it in comfort at home: at least you can switch off. And one night's television audience of millions would take a 14-year run in the West End to achieve.

The Donmar has acquired its own special buzz, like the Royal Court and the Almeida — and Mendes says he can't imagine anywhere he would rather operate.

Not even the National? He was invited to apply for Richard Eyre's job, soon to be Trevor Nunn's, but he rightly declined. It came too soon. "It would have consumed ten years of my life, and there are many things I don't possess to keep a perspective on a job like this. I don't have a family or a home base."

"I'd have been spat out at 45, blinking in the sunlight. I would love to run a big theatre some time. But I have many other things to do first — films, musicals, opera..."

A corner of Paris that remains forever England

Joseph Connolly on a shop the French have taken to heart

British designers such as John Galiano and Alexander McQueen may or may not be taking Paris by storm, but what is absolutely sure is that there is a little corner of Paris that truly has been England for the past 75 years. The shirt-maker Hilditch & Key is the oldest English shop in the capital, and beautifully situated on the Rue de Rivoli, directly opposite the Place de la Concorde.

What is quite startling about this 1920s establishment, however, is the way it has become adopted and adored by the very cream of French society, politics, arts and aristocracy — to say nothing of a clutch of the most internationally famous French designers of all.

During the first week of this year, Edouard Balladur — an old customer — strolled into the shop and selected half a dozen shirts. A recent cover of *Le Figaro* shows him wearing a Hilditch shirt, cravat and very fetching multicoloured striped alpaca cardigan. But it is the designers' vote that really counts. Karl Lagerfeld has all his shirts hand-made by Hilditch & Key, whose files are bulging with handwritten letters from him, praising the perfection of the product.

Most of the shirts sold are ready-made, but if you do go for bespoke, then you are buying the best in the world: even the buttonholes are sewn entirely by hand — and you simply don't encounter that, these days, outside Savile Row, and then only with the suits. Lagerfeld is not the only person at Chanel who finds H&K irresistible. The women's clothes — shirts, scarves, sweaters, wraps and the like — are superb, and the shop has many female fans — Elle Macpherson, Claudia Schiffer, Jane Birkin — even Paloma Picasso. The shop is managed by Bruce

Philipps, who has been with the company for 14 years, and he makes no secret of which of his illustrious customers he admires the most: none other than Yves Saint Laurent. "In my view," says Mr Philipps, "everything that man touches turns to gold — he is the most perfect designer of all." Maybe so, but he can't be too enamoured of shirts with the YSL label — he makes sure that his own come from Hilditch & Key.

This quintessentially English institution was founded in 1899 in Jermyn Street in London — there are two shops there still, a third having opened last year in Sloane Street. There is also a mail order service and its produce finds its way into top stores around the world, notably Saks Fifth Avenue. The business must have prospered very early on because in the early 1920s it opened its Paris shop — not a



Fan: Schiffer

thing that small English companies were noted for doing. The merchandise in the Paris shop is rather more daring than in its London counterparts — cashmere sweaters (a firm favourite) in strong and vivid colours, luxurious cashmere and wool dressing gowns and shirts with a touch more pizzazz.

It is impossible to think of any other non-French shop that has anything like such a hold on Paris (a favourite) — most of the people who make Paris what it is walk through its doors. Hilditch & Key goes about its business with rather more subtlety than the newly elevated breed of British couturiers. But certainly the approach is arresting — H&K has le tout Paris both collared and cuffed.

● Hilditch & Key is at 25 Rue de Rivoli (Place de la Concorde) 75001 Paris. Also at 37 and 73 Jermyn Street, London SW1 and 131 Sloane Street, London SW1.

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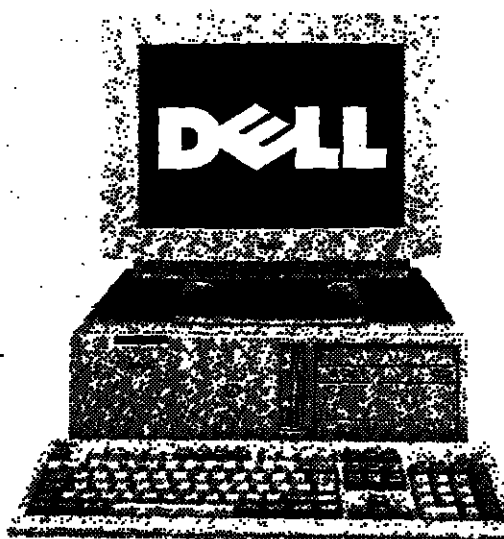
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مركزاً من لاصم

Philip Howard



After Dolly, who next? I can think of two candidates for cloning

If we are going to clone the treasures of our human resources, Ted Heath should be the first. He will just have to spare us a few adult cells from somewhere for the heritage preservation industry.

But the Heath clone we want is not Sailor Ted skipping *Morning Cloud* to victory in the Admiral's Cup. Nor is it choral scholar Ted rapt at his Christmas carol concert or conducting his recording of Elgar's *Cockaigne* overture. Nor is it jolly Ted with shoulders heaving. Nor is it technocrat Ted rattling off quotas of bananas and butter so fast that his performance wins him from *Private Eye* the nickname of Grocer. Nor is it bestselling author Ted flogging his books (of an almost Archersian banality, particularly sound on banquet menus) from a special train around the pollster suburbs, where buying an autographed copy was the next best thing to voting Tory in years without an election. Nor is he the radical, classless Ted, the first Tory Prime Minister from a grammar school.

All these are Ted Heaths we know and love — no doubt to different degrees. But the Heath at the evolutionary stage that we should clone is the grumpy old boy in a suit. For as that he is a unique treasure and irreplaceable. We need the Father of the House glowering at the Grocer's Daughter from his seat below the gangway. We must preserve the Ted Heath selectively pouring scorn on her economic policies and her lack of vision about Europe. We want the Ted Heath who disliked two things above all else: people who disagreed with him and women. And Margaret Thatcher happened to be both. We want the Heath whom Nicky Fairbairn described as "a little boy sucking his misogynist thumb and blubbing and carping in the corner of the front bench below the gangway". We recognise with delight the Ted Heath of whom George Gardiner, with more truth than black propaganda for once, observed that "receiving support from him in a by-election is like being measured by an undertaker".

For that image of the chrysalis Ted Heath is an English institution. And his role as national Mr Grumpy is an archetype. Grumpy has been a fiery star from *Timon of Athens* to Molière's *Misanthrope*, and from Scrooge to Statler and Waldorf, the two Muppet curmudgeons. Theatres played his part in the *Iliad*. And one of the first comedies of the Western stage is Menander's *Dyskolos* or *The Grouch*. Literature as well as life would be poorer without such bad-tempered figures of both fear and fun. Children like to be terrified by rage that is clearly pretended.

After we have cloned Ted Heath for the nation, and incidentally ensured that he can appear simultaneously on *Newsnight* and *News at Ten*, we must consider other national heroes for cloning. Another archetype as powerful as the angry old man in a balaclava is the sage and seer, the wise Merlin figure who can foresee the future from his knowledge of the past. And a strong candidate for that clone is my former Editor who appears on this page on Mondays and Thursdays.

I went to a Caudy (old boys' reunion feast) at Trinity, Oxford. The main speaker, as is the ritual on these occasions, was praising Trinity and Trinity men of bygone days to the skies, when a Falstaffian archetype halfway down the hall rose unsteadily to his feet and cried: "I have an anecdote!" His neighbours pulled him down by his sleeves. He bobbed straight up again like a bad apple. So he had either to be carried out or left to tell his anecdote. The latter course seemed more prudent. His anecdote ran: "Of course Trinity in our day was the best college: head of the river, winner of Cuppers, home of the brave. But by far the most celebrated event in my time was performed by me. There was this dreadful swot at Balliol over the wall from my rooms. Called Rees-Mogg. Always getting his name in the papers. Well I got my two Service revolvers, and let off 12 rounds at him one night when he was sitting there illuminated. Missed the bugger. But I must have given him one hell of a fright. I often wonder what happened to him in later life." Just in case there are such Trinity scholars still around, let us clone William for the nation, at once.

Tessa Blackstone accuses the Government of neglecting culture, and outlines Labour's arts policy

Heritage versus a creative economy

Recently there has been an avalanche of press reports describing London as the style capital of the world, a symbol of a suddenly discovered, or perhaps rediscovered, "Cool Britannia". Behind all the hype lurks a truth we seem reluctant to acknowledge. It is that as a nation we are pre-eminent in almost every field of the arts and cultural innovation, what Tony Blair in a recent speech on the arts called "the creative economy".

The facts speak for themselves. We account for something like 20 per cent of world sales of recorded music. *Les Misérables* has become a major export industry in its own right, clocking up almost £600 million in overseas earnings. The most innovative and successful creator of electronic games, itself a £6 billion a year industry, is based on Merseyside. And so on. In theatre, fashion, television, design, advertising and architecture, Britain is a world leader. These are formidable assets in a global economy which is more and more driven by a trade in ideas as well as goods.

"Intellectual property" such as music, the audiovisual industries, publishing, software, and other industries whose value derives essentially from rights and royalties, now earns more for the American economy than any other sector. It is growing twice as fast as the rest of the economy and generating jobs almost four times faster. That trend is

mirrored in Britain. The 1991 census revealed that employment in the cultural industries grew 34 per cent in ten years, against a background of virtually no change in overall employment.

That is not to suggest that the nation's cultural life is nothing more than a useful export industry. The arts are an essential component of any civilised society. In an age of uncertainty about our values, they can provide powerful forms of self-identity and communication for individuals and for the nation as a whole. They should stimulate not just national pride but also rational policy. Sadly, the Government has failed to recognise either their commercial or their cultural significance, and the success with which many local authorities have put the arts at the centre of strategies for the regeneration of local economies and of civic pride has been accomplished despite the efforts of central government. There are many examples of government failure, from

the lack of adequate planning for the distribution of National Lottery money to the lack of support for dance and drama students, which means the next generation of performing talent is not getting the opportunities it deserves.

Predictably, an over-prescriptive national curriculum has squeezed the arts from school timetables, as a damning report last year from the Royal Society of Arts confirmed. We need to rehabilitate the arts as a legitimate area of public policy. One way to start is by putting them back where they properly belong — at the heart of education. Arts and education feed each other. Schools and colleges are the source both of the artists and the audiences of the future.

For sound social and economic reasons, it behoves good government to foster a climate in which the arts are accessible to all and in which excellence is valued and nurtured. We can build on the commitment of the best local authorities and the innovative work of

the regional arts boards, allowing the Arts Council to be a strategic planner and promoter of good practice. We should recognise that broadcasting is the dominant means of access to an enjoyment of the arts. The BBC's power as a patron of the arts far exceeds that of the Arts Council itself, and on the basis of its Oscar nominations, Channel 4 claims to rank alongside some of the Hollywood studios as a successful film-maker. The recent Labour Party review rightly recommended that all major arts funding applications should include plans to use broadcasting to reach new audiences. More television channels and the advent of digital terrestrial television will make the role of broadcasters even more important.

An arts scene that is genuinely popular and lively, with engaged and critical audiences, enables talent to flourish. At present, too much talent goes unrecognised and undeveloped.

Labour's proposal for a National Endowment for Science, Humanities and the Arts (Nesta) is intended to address this sad state of affairs. Just as the National Trust encourages endowments of land and property to be enjoyed by future generations, Nesta will encourage artists and other creative people to donate copyrights as an endowment for the support of future talent. Today's successes will provide seed-corn for tomorrow's.

In that sense, the scheme is a paradigm of what a good arts policy should be, building on the heritage of the past, not for its own sake but to discover new directions for the future. It is unfortunate that the government department responsible for the arts goes under the label of "heritage". It should be more concerned with the future than with the past, not least because that future looks bright. The vitality of our cultural life will be a key element in any attempt to rebuild a more cohesive and inclusive society. It also seems likely to be an increasingly significant motor of the national economy, a major potential source of jobs and wealth, and one of the most attractive aspects of our international image. It adds up to an enviable position from which to step into a new millennium, and that is a bonus we ought not to waste.

Baroness Blackstone is a Labour spokesman in the Lords.

The West Lothian nightmare

What would a Scottish parliament do to England? Make chauvinists of the Tories

It is February 1999. Labour has won the 1997 election and, after a short Commons struggle, instituted referendums in Wales and Scotland to discover whether their peoples desired parliaments of their own. The Scots referendum has included a second question: Shall their parliament have tax-raising powers?

Wales has voted narrowly against a parliament, while Scotland voted "yes" to a parliament but "no" to tax-raising powers. After a long and debilitating fight in the Commons and Lords, a Bill to give Scotland its parliament has passed, the institution has been set up in Edinburgh, and elections to it have taken place. Edinburgh's remit includes health, education, local government, employment, heritage, transport, home affairs (most of them) and a fair measure of the portfolio of the former "President of the Board of Trade" too.

As Edinburgh has no power to raise revenue, but must govern with grants from Westminster, the Scots parliament is in a state of permanent rage at what its members see as inadequate funding from London. Every domestic ill or want is blamed on insufficient resources from London. Scots political careers are being carved by skill in doing this, and conflict is stirred cruelly by the Principal Opposition in Edinburgh, the Scottish National Party, which portrays Scottish Labour (the governing party) as the poodle of an English master, Tony Blair. The campaign brings the SNP rewards in local government elections. Scottish Labour members and their Edinburgh leader, a Mr Robert Mackay, are driven into the most intransigent posture they dare risk, against the Labour government in England. The Scottish National Party is boycotting the London legislature.

The English electorate is baffled and annoyed by all this. Voters hardly understand the feuding within the ruling Labour Party, and are not disposed to try. They are left with a vague feeling that Scottish politicians are a troublesome, greedy and ungrateful lot. They are, of course, ruled by Scottish politicians — "ruled" in the sense that Scotland has also sent some 55 Scottish MPs to Westminster, where the London government's overall majority is 37. Without these Scots colleagues in the Westminster division lobbies, none of the government's measures, including all its measures for English health, education, local government and so forth, could be passed.

The temperature is high, misunderstandings are easy to fan. Into this unhappy scene step the Secretary of State for Local Government in England and Wales, the northeastern Jack Cunningham, and his Edinburgh opposite number, Mr Mackay. There has been a growing need to choose a site in which to bury low-level nuclear waste, produced in both Scottish and English power stations. Possible sites have been identified in Northumbria and Fife.

English MPs from the North East are enraged, but the whole Scottish Labour Party confronts Prime Minister Blair with the truth that the SNP will make mincemeat of them if Fife is chosen — for Sassenach waste! Blair, weakened by other disputes, taps his London Cabinet into recommending Northumbria.

Mackay beats Cunningham. There is a rebellion by English Labour MPs from the North East plus the whole Tory Opposition, but, using his army of 55 Scots MPs, Blair crushes it in the Westminster division lobbies.

It is unfortunate that at this moment two government Bills are overturned in the as yet unreformed Lords: one to dismantle the last remaining grammar schools in England, the other (the NHS being in one of the more acute of its cash crises) to give the English Health Secretary emergency powers to close hospitals in England without the customary consultation and delay. Returning to the Commons, both Bills provoke rebellions by English MPs, but the Scottish Labour infantry is used to beat both down.

Fate never endowed me with brains, brawn or good looks in any unusual measure; but what did come my way was a calm and massive faith in the power of a sound argument. Grasp that rope, and in the end you will never be confounded. To my surprise, better men than me — cleverer, sometimes, too — gibber in the face of the opinions of others. Being, at heart, always a little afraid of logic, I weigh arguments like flour — "How strongly do how many people feel about this now?" — rather than evaluating what is sustainable. They minimise the risk of being confounded by their peers, preferring the risk of being confounded by events.

And so we come to this Tuesday's letter to *The Times* from Lord Jenkins of Hillhead. Jenkins is a good, brave man with a powerful mind; but he has taken fright: not at the logic of the devolutionists' case, but at its passion. After a



discursion into the Irish question in the 19th century, he urges that a parliament for Scotland "had better be accepted" or else the Union will be in danger.

But that is not an argument, it is a threat. Lord Jenkins offers it as his solution to the failed West Lothian question. Or, rather, he declares that in the face of this threat, "the West Lothian question, neatly unanswerable although it is, falls into insignificance". It is easy to picture the civilised yet dismissive wave of the wrist with which Lord Jenkins would say "falls into insignificance".

But does it? Will it? Does the question "What would Scottish MPs at Westminster be for?" fall into insignificance? More than two-thirds of the Commons business this week past — a National Heritage Bill, London Underground, social security, the Church of England, education and employment — would, after devolution, have gone to Edinburgh or appear as "English and Welsh" business at Westminster. Does it "fall into insignificance" to ask what Scottish MPs at Westminster would be doing here?

When the votes of Scottish MPs, strangers to their own country's parliament, swing the Commons axe over St

Thomas's Hospital in London, slash grants to English local authorities, abolish English grammar schools or direct the burial of nuclear waste in England, will the West Lothian question fall into insignificance? Let Scottish MPs vote: clinch the closure of Devonport naval dockyard, and wait for the *Daily Mail*: "Bury Doune waste in Northumbria say Scots MPs"; wait for the first brick through the window of the first Scottish MPs' London apartment; and ask yourself whether that brick, and the anger which will propel it, "falls into insignificance".

Few can match Lord Jenkins's understanding of the Irish question at the end of the last century, but some of us have some understanding of the Tory party at the end of this one. I say to him — what none of the present Cabinet can say but many fear — that his road leads inexorably to the emergence of the English Conservative Party and precisely the "little England chauvinism" that he and I so fear. If, with me, he had watched the response and body-language of the government benches during last week's thrilling debate on devolution, he would know that this

could come very fast — within months, not years. It is simmering beneath the surface now.

Lord Jenkins says the West Lothian question is unanswerable. It is not. There is a simple answer: the establishment of a comparable parliament for England: not bits of England, not the East Midlands or the Welsh Marches, but England. If we get Scottish devolution, this will become the official policy of the Conservative Party, before the millennium.

It is not too late — but there remain only days — for Mr Blair to withdraw his proposals, in favour of a new post-election consultation across the parties. It is not too late for Mr Major to respond with a recognition that the rage England would feel against Scottish rule is the rage Scots feel now about rule from England. It's an embarrassment and a bore, but weariness and pain, both sides must agree to tear up their cardboard models and start again.

This will be almost impossible for Mr Blair to do. But that he wants to and knows he ought to, I can know without speaking to him. I can know because I know he, too, understands the power of argument.

Bell rings

THEY are already manning the boats at Conservative Central Office for after the election. Charles Lewington, the director of communications at Smith Square, is said to be in the first lift-off. He plans to leave Central Office after the election, whatever the result.

He tells some that he fancies a return to newspapers, which may be difficult for a while in the light of his obviously politically slanted work over the past couple of years. Others, however, seem sure that he will be finding his way into the

welcoming arms of Sir Tim Bell and his PR business. He has been seeing a lot of Bell recently in planning meetings for the election. Lewington was political editor of the *Sunday Express* and a favourite of its Editor, Eve Pollard, before Central Office came shopping for him. His manner and permanent tan are more suited to a game-show host or Mediterranean gigolo than a political hatchet-man.

Bell's company has been a useful halfway house for many former political advisers. Jonathan Hill, the Prime Minister's political secretary, went there after No 10, as did Stephen Sherbourne, Margaret Thatcher's political secretary. As one former colleague of Lewington's puts it: "He'd love it with Bell. He is after all a man who likes plants on his desk and his coffee out of china cups."

● Theft is rife among visitors to the Royal Opera House at the moment. They have been taking mementoes such as lavatory signs before the place closes for a two-year refit in July. Keith Cooper, the general manager of the ROH, is keen to stop the crimewave. "There

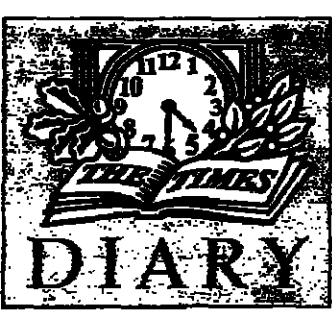
will be plenty of opportunity for people to buy their mementoes, so they needn't steal them." So enough of the furtive trousering.

One's rush

THE unprecedented levels of security surrounding the state visit of President Weizman of Israel seem to have inconvenienced the Queen as well as London's drivers. On Wednesday, she found herself delayed en route to the unveiling of the Raoul Wallenberg statue.



"I'm sorry, it's another \$20,000 to use the bathroom"



When she arrived, before either her greeting party or her chauffeur could make it to open her door, she had dispensed with ceremony, opened the door herself and got out to be greeted by a flushed Lord Mayor.

Family fella

FOR anyone still baffled about precisely what it is spin-doctors do, a good example appeared in yesterday's *Sun*. Blazoned across two pages were Tony Blair and his wife, with the Labour leader saying he would "walk away from politics tomorrow" if he was forced to choose between his family and his job. Only last week, Blair was completely outlandish on the family man front in *Cosmopolitan* magazine. Asked to name the most sig-

nificant events in their lives, a blushing John Major nominated his marriage to Norma, while Blair offered his election as leader of the Labour Party. Thanks to the spinners who guard his image, the record has been put straight.

Hats off

THIS evening sees John Major fundraising in Glasgow for a silly hat party. It has all the makings of a disaster. Marquees are planned on the banks of the Clyde. Unfortunately, so are gales.



Major headache

Comedy hats will be handed out at the entrance, presumably in homage to Douglas Hogg and the PM's own appearance in 'tribal' headgear at the Khyber Pass earlier this year. By way of a challenge to any paparazzi, the order has come from No 10: no cameras.

● Impressing the judges at this year's Miss Belgium beauty contest will require more than two hobbies and an intimate knowledge of nail-varnish, after a regional heat was won by an economics student. Sandrine Durrant, 19, was crowned Miss Brabant Wallon after giving a speech on the merits of a single European currency.

Grey gay

ON THE stage at the Fringe nightclub in Brixton on Wednesday night was a young man in shorts, carrying a smorcel shouting "I'm gay and I work for the Treasury." Meet John Gillespie, Band C civil servant and enthusiastic entrant in the London heats of Mr Gay UK. Greasing up backstage before the show, Gillespie confessed that although he was concerned about what this might do to his promotion prospects, he was tired of the anonymity of Civil Service work and "always wanted to be famous".



Sandrine euro one

"He's 18kg, enjoys rowing, dancing and vandalism," said the copera. "His role model is ex-Take Thater, Gary Barlow," and on came Gillespie in trunks and vest. He soon dispensed with the top, removed the smorcel from between his lips and let out a huge cathartic cry: "I work for the Treasury," and it is cool. "He did not qualify for the next round."

P.H.S.



Lewington: way out



ANKARA COUP FEVER

Warning time for Turkey and its allies

Turkey is a pivotal member of Nato. Its integrity and democracy are vital not only to regional stability but to the Atlantic alliance as a whole. Turkish democracy now looks increasingly imperilled. The Islamic Government of Necmettin Erbakan has embarked on a campaign to give Islam a more visible position in Turkish public life. This has alarmed many people, including politicians, who see a threat to the long-established secular Constitution. President Demirel, an influential political veteran, has made clear his concern. More ominously, the Turkish Army, which sees itself as a guardian of the Ataturk Constitution, is implacably opposed to the trend. It has already sent tanks through the capital's Islamic suburbs as a warning. Today Mr Erbakan has a crucial meeting with senior officers. Tension is running high and rumours are rife. The threat of a military coup is everywhere.

To dismiss the army's concern as bluster is to underestimate its power and growing dismay at the fumbling of Mr Erbakan's ill-matched coalition. Turkey's military establishment is far from happy. It had hopes, along with other weary voters, that the advent to power of the Welfare Party might lead to a breakthrough in the guerrilla war with the Kurds — a conflict that has taken more than 12,000 lives. Under an Islamic banner of unity, it was hoped that Mr Erbakan might be able to satisfy Kurdish political and cultural demands. No such thing has happened, and the war goes on.

The army has also looked with dismay at the Government's crass attempts to pursue an Islamic foreign policy with provocative visits by Mr Erbakan to Iran and Libya. These have weakened Turkey's influence in Washington and been used by the Greek lobby there to undermine Turkey's request for new weapons. As a result, Turkey is now subject to an undeclared weapons embargo. For the army, Nato is a source of strength

and pride; anything that weakens Turkey's position in the alliance is deeply resented.

European policy has been equally unsuccessful — although the Europeans are largely to blame. The worsening relations with Greece, the provocative Cypriot insistence on buying Russian missiles and the European Union's continued withholding of funds to offset Turkish losses from the customs union have all made the Government look weak and increased a sense of isolation in Ankara. Turkey, one of the earliest applicants for full EU membership, now sees itself being overtaken in the queue by 11 other applicants. And with Greece unwilling to offer Turkey even the face-saving guarantee that its case will be considered equally with the others.

Despite a long campaign against the Islamists by other political parties, voters took a chance on Welfare. They thought that nothing could be worse than the mess made by the traditional parties; and they believed that the army and any secular coalition partner would keep the Islamic trend under control. In the second they have been disappointed. High-profile rows such as those over the attempt to allow women civil servants to wear headscarves and a proposal to build a new mosque in Istanbul's main square have convinced many that the Government is encouraging Islamic fundamentalism and that Tansu Ciller, the junior coalition partner, has little power to stop it.

Yet no one wants the army to step in, as it did in 1960 and 1980. It would be a disastrous setback for Turkish democracy and encourage Islamic underground fanaticism. The economy is in better shape than in 1980 and the army itself knows the risk of intervention. President Demirel has no power to dismiss the Prime Minister. But he and the army officers can warn him of the dangers of his political course. For the sake of Turkey and the alliance, he should listen.

CASH FOR ANSWERS

University funding should reflect research excellence

The days when only economics dons talked about money have long since passed for Britain's universities. The issues of overall funding levels and the internal allocation between institutions now dominate academic life. The latest cash grants outlined by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) yesterday will doubtless spark further fury in the common rooms. The total amount available has been frozen in real terms, which will disappoint many but surprise few. On the other hand the Government has conceded rather greater delegation over decisions between capital and current expenditure, which is an overdue offer of flexibility.

The most intense scrutiny, though, will be placed on the individual totals awarded. This year those figures were intended to reflect the recently completed research assessment procedure. Universities were informed that their performance would be linked to scrutiny of their scholarly output. Such outside monitoring of standards has never been popular. Protests about the amount of additional paperwork and bureaucracy involved have considerable legitimacy. The accompanying charge that the whole concept of comparison was impossible had rather less to commend it.

Despite this off-expressed distaste, the financial inducements available appeared to have some impact. In aggregate, the numbers achieving higher grades from this external evaluation showed an encouraging increase from the 1992 equivalent. More impressive still were the number of departments that achieved the new, and welcome, five star highest rank indicating a standard of significant international excellence.

The sums awarded by the funding agency have followed the research exercise to some

extent but not completely. Institutions that showed a dramatic improvement have had part of their increase "moderated": that is, their gain has been clawed back to subsidise those who were judged to have made little or no progress over the past four years. This has been explained by the claim that dramatic shifts in financial settlements would be unduly disruptive on those who found their resources cut. As a consequence, University College, London will receive nearly £1.7 million less than otherwise; Oxford University just over £1 million, and Imperial College, London, over £500,000.

Had that money been transferred to those institutions that recently switched from polytechnic status it might be justified. Many of these new bodies have not yet had the opportunity to develop their potential as research centres. The real beneficiaries from this policy decision, however, include the Universities of Exeter, Liverpool, London and Manchester, which could not be considered disadvantaged or less than established by any stretch of the imagination. This is a simple case of the rules being altered to assist those whose relative performance was less impressive. The principle of rewarding excellence has been diluted to restore equity.

There seems little point in obliging higher education to endure such assessment if the results are then rewritten. It discriminates against those who have made an effort to improve and undermines the entire exercise. After the 1992 enterprise some version of redistribution endured for three years. This time, HEFCE has pledged that the cross-subsidy will stay in place for 12 months only. If the council is serious in its stated aim of investing in world-class research then it will not last a moment longer.

MODERN MEDICI

Patron of pickled cows moves to Piccadilly

The most powerful Renaissance patrons supported their personal aesthetic judgments with large fortunes. The artists profited, and so did their backers. In Britain today, patronage has revived, but much of it rests in the hands of just one man: Charles Saatchi. Mr Saatchi has contributed more to the international recognition of young British artists than any public institution. Now his collections are to reach a larger audience in a show at the Royal Academy.

Other rich Britons collect art, though the pursuit is nothing like as common here as it is in America or Germany. But Sir Denis Mahon, who has built up a great collection of 17th-century Italian paintings, and Lord Lloyd-Webber, who has amassed a large body of Pre-Raphaelite and other Victorian art, have not in the process helped living painters. A patron is more than a collector: by his financial support, he ensures that the art which he appreciates will flourish.

Mr Saatchi has been buying modern British art for nearly 30 years. He has built a gallery in Boundary Road where the annual gallery of young British artists regularly attracts between 50,000 and 75,000 visitors. In its first year, which was 1992, it included Damien Hirst and Rachel Whiteread. It is *enfant terrible* of their generation. It is now seen as a barometer of success and as a big opening at the Tate. And where Mr

Saatchi leads, the subsidised galleries follow. In making himself an arbiter of taste, he has been criticised for making one-way bets, for backing and buying artworks from which he is bound to make money, whatever happens. Presumably, in the best traditions of his craft, he does make money from his patronage. Yet taste is a fickle thing: there are huge financial risks in being the only big player in a field that could easily be abandoned for another.

Mr Saatchi's taste is not shared by all; indeed it is excoriated by many who see in it only kudos for the sensation-seeking. Not everyone will be happy that his artists will be legitimised by such an august institution as the Royal Academy. But the question of whether pickled cows should qualify as art is for critics, not collectors. It is they who are supposed to be arbiters of artistic merit. And let other patrons, with other tastes, vie too for the title of modern Medici.

The likes of Mr Hirst, Marc Quinn and Marcus Harvey have helped to make modern Britain celebrated around the world. The Royal Academy has caught the spirit of the times. Its Piccadilly galleries will be able to attract a more varied crowd than now makes the pilgrimage to Boundary Road. If people hate the work, so be it. And if Mr Saatchi increases the value of his collection by opening it up to wider view, good luck to him.

Investment 'crisis' of London's Tube

From the Chief Executive of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Sir, Among the increasing number of suggested solutions to London's Tube investment crisis (reports, February 26) is the theory, endorsed by Labour, that a strategic authority would provide an effective voice with which to argue for sufficient funding levels. History suggests differently, however. According to London Transport's own figures, the investment backlog in 1988 stood at £2 billion at today's prices — that was just two years after the abolition of the Greater London Council. Since then, far from getting worse, the backlog has been whittled away to £1.2 billion.

A strategic body of some description, which London's business community would warmly welcome but for different reasons, is only part of the solution to the present problems. Other elements include the effective management of London Transport, which already exists, and the political determination to ensure adequate investment funding, which clearly does not.

Whether or not the Tube is eventually privatised, investors will be happy to invest in a network, provided a commercial rate of return is forthcoming. London certainly needs a strategic body, but not in order to recruit investors; rather, it needs one to promote and defend its interests, to co-ordinate public policy more generally, and to ensure that policymaking in London becomes more transparent.

To our competitors in other world cities it can seem ludicrous that a city of London's magnitude, responsible for providing one fifth of the UK's GDP, lacks an accountable, transparent and effective means of formulating and co-ordinating policy.

It is also ludicrous that London's Tube system, which you rightly describe as "this marvel of Victorian engineering" (leading article, February 24), is abandoned to dilapidation. But a new government structure for London is not sufficient in itself to ensure this. It needs political will too.

Yours faithfully,
SIMON SPERRY,
Chief Executive, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry,
33 Queen Street, EC4,
February 26.

From Mr Ilyd Harrington

Sir, It really is beyond belief that the Government, with Sir George Young cast once again as Pontius Pilate, is washing its capital investment failures away with a privatisation solution for London's Underground.

It has long been apparent, certainly to the City and its Lord Mayor, that for 60 years public investment and accountability proved to be a successful formula.

London now has the highest fares in Europe. No one can deny that the New York subway is cheaper and in many ways more reliable than London's.

A once-envied public utility should resume that role in the hands of local London government.

Yours faithfully,
ILLYD HARRINGTON
(Deputy Leader, GLC, 1973-85),
16 Lea House, Salisbury Street, NW8,
February 25.

From Mr John Norton

Sir, As an American tourist in London on two occasions within the past year, I urge the powers that be to heed Peter Riddell's advice on February 24, "Mind the funding gap", and to find the funding needed for the Tube.

From a tourist's perspective, Tube transport is a national — or at least a London — treasure. There is no better way to gain an appreciation for the characters of the many Londons that I have come to enjoy but never would have save for Tube transit. By contrast, the New York subways are the absolute last place one would wish to consign a tourist to.

I hope that the rider of modest means, foreign or native — is not forgotten in any scheme to privatise the system and that the ingenious simplicity of a fairly complex system will be maintained. Thousands of us look forward to renewing our acquaintance with London via its wonderful Tube.

Yours etc,
JOHN NORTON,
9 East High Street,
Annville, PA 17003,
February 25.

Quite a quorum

From Mr Timothy M. Simon

Sir, Committees, in my experience, are a device invented to thwart decision-making and to provide people with a frequently undesired forum; but the mind of even the most committed committee must have been boggled at the size of the funeral committee established for Deng Xiaoping — 459 members (report, February 21). I admit that it appears to have operated with an efficiency which many smaller committees would be proud to emulate, maybe in time-honoured fashion it spawned a sub-committee.

Yours faithfully,
T. M. SIMON,
2 New Square, WC2,
February 25.

Business letters, page 27

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

West Lothian question: flaws in the Ulster analogy

From Lord Blake, FBA

Sir, Lord Jenkins of Hillhead (letter, February 25), dealing with the "awkwardness" of the West Lothian question, concluded that on the analogy of Northern Ireland "it had better be accepted for Scotland (perhaps with some reduction in the number of Scottish seats at Westminster)".

Why "perhaps"? What possible justification could there be for Scotland to have both a devolved parliament in Edinburgh and 71 seats in Westminster when on a population basis it is entitled to only 57? Indeed, if the analogy of Northern Ireland is accepted, it should have even fewer.

As Mr Jonathan Caine pointed out in his letter of February 21, from 1920 until the abolition of the Stormont parliament in 1972 Northern Ireland had only 12 seats at Westminster. On a population basis it would have had 17. If Scotland is to have a devolved parliament its representation at Westminster ought to be reduced to 40.

Yours faithfully,
BLAKE
House of Lords,
February 25.

From the Director of the Conservative Political Centre

Sir, It is pointless to follow Roy Jenkins in speculating about whether Anglo-Irish unity would have been secured if Gladstone's Home Rule Bills had passed. Gladstone knew

little of Ulster and cared less. He refused to discuss his plans seriously with members of his own party in the Province, and he dismissed unmistakable signs of widespread resistance in 1886 as "momentary ebullitions, which will pass away with the fears from which they spring". Any devolution scheme for Ireland which included the majority of Ulster's Unionists could never have become practical politics, and Irish nationalists were not willing to contemplate partition seriously before 1912.

Opponents of a Scottish parliament with legislative and tax-raising powers can easily withstand arguments based on wishful thinking about Irish history. But, like Irish Unionists a century ago, they need constructive alternatives. Under this Government they have been able to develop their ideas much more fully than their predecessors, curbed by unimaginative English Tories, were ever in a position to do.

The Union between Scotland and the rest of the country has been transformed by Michael Forsyth's reforms. Local government in Scotland has been put on a more democratic basis (something, incidentally, that Gladstone in the early 1880s flatly refused to do in Ireland). Most importantly, a form of devolution has been found that avoids the West Lothian question and all other difficulties, through the expansion of the Scottish Grand Committee. It can meet anywhere in Scotland; it can deal with all Scottish legis-

lation; and it can call all ministers (not just Scottish Office ministers) to account.

This Government has reconciled devolution and Union.

Yours faithfully,
ALISTAIR B. COOKE,
Director,
Conservative Political Centre,
32 Smith Square, Westminster, SW1,
February 25.

From Dr H. A. Will

Sir, Lord Jenkins's perceptive letter does not do justice to the logic of Joseph Chamberlain's position in 1886 on the question of Irish representation at Westminster.

Why Chamberlain finally came to regard that representation as crucial was because, in his view, it would open the way for a future federal relationship between England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland on the lines, as he put it, of the relations between the Canadian provinces. That was his answer to the West Lothian question and to the wider and, for him, far more important question of preventing the ultimate separation of Ireland from the United Kingdom.

It is, whatever its practicality, the only logical constitutional settlement.

Yours faithfully,
H. A. WILL,
11 Russell Avenue,
Hartley, Plymouth, Devon,
February 26.

Two of a kind

From Mr Ian C. Boulton

Sir, Libby Purves takes a welcome step away from sensationalism in her comment on the cloning of Dolly the lamb ("Like a wolf in the fold", February 25), but she nonetheless asserts that "if we prefer the illusory control of cloning to the glorious gamble of life, we will be interfering with nature in a way far more arrogant and damaging than ever before".

By definition, cloned animals are genetically identical, but the prospect of such organisms being routinely found in agriculture is extremely remote. Farming is a highly competitive business and irrespective of the inevitable reduction in cloning costs, it seems unlikely that tried and tested methods of reproduction will ever be

underused.

Any form of selective breeding has the potential to reduce the available gene pool. Ms Purves's concerns would be more appropriate if directed against the practices of modern farming than the scientific community.

Yours faithfully,
IAN C. BOULTON,
Guy's and St Thomas' Hospital,
Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology,
London Bridge, SE1,
February 25.

From Mr G. S. Marvin

Sir, The sub-heading on Libby Purves's article suggests that cloning of animals reduces diversity. This is not necessarily so in nature as a whole. At a different level dandelions have been cloning for thousands of years.

Clones are capable of hybridising and producing new genotypes, which may be regarded as "species". In Britain alone some 130 different species are now recognised (*Dandelions*, A.J. Richards, Botanical Society of the British Isles, 1973).

Yours etc,
STANLEY MARVIN,
8 Adenbrook Road,
Droghda, Westmeath,
February 25.

From Mr John Kay

Sir, An Edinburgh genetics laboratory has apparently created, for the first time ever, a cloned sheep.

Having just returned from a visit to North Wales, I have to say I find it very difficult to believe their work is unique.

Yours sincerely,
JOHN KAY,
Hazelwood, Priory Road,
West Kirby, Wirral, Merseyside,
February 27.

From Mr K. L. Rawling

Sir, Perhaps we should bear in mind the words attributed to Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Never try to make anyone like yourself — you know, and God knows, that one of you is sufficient."

Yours etc,
K. L. RAWLING,
10 Somerville Terrace,
Otley, West Yorkshire,
February 26.

From Mrs J. Hadfield

Sir, How correct was the BBC, in a news programme last night, to describe the cloned sheep as "unique"?

Yours faithfully,
J. F. HADFIELD,
Yew Cottage,
West Pennard, Somerset,
February 25.

From Mr Paul D. Hale

Sir, Alan Shearer's unfortunate admission to hospital yet again (report, Sport, February 27) presents an opportunity. We have the technology, let's use it. Clone Alan Shearer now!

Yours faithfully,
P. D. HALE,
21 Wilson Street, EC2,
February 27.

Vanunu plea

From Mr David Harounoff

Sir, Neither Mr Mordechai Vanunu's motives nor the medium he used to reveal details of Israel's nuclear capability can mitigate his actions (Andrew Neil's letter, February 24). One submission in mitigation is remorse. Sadly, that has been absent from any pleadings advanced by or on behalf of Mr Vanunu.

That the State of Israel was at the time of Mr Vanunu's crime — and indeed remains — in a state of war with Syria, Iraq, Iran and Libya is beyond dispute. The threat of activating its nuclear deterrent was enough to cause the Syrians to halt their advance into Israel's northern territory during the 1973 October war. It may have played a part in dissuading the Iraqis from deploying chemical and biological warheads against Israel during the

Crime and punishment

From Mr Peter G. Smith

Sir, At one level Lord Rees-Mogg ("The Lords aren't soft on crime, just sensible", February 17) may be correct in his assertion that it would become more difficult to manage, in a rational way, the resources deployed in the prevention, detection and punishment of crime without some distinction between that which is petty and that which is serious (letters, February 18, 19, 22).

However, at another level, surely what the Home Office is attempting to do is to take some account of the feelings of victims of petty crime. In this respect, at least, the opinions of the man on top of the bus, much deprecated by Lord Rees-Mogg, are surely reasonably valid.

The cumulative effect of petty crime can have a devastating effect on the lives of the poorer members of our society. All too often we read of council estates and other communities where residents and their possessions are regularly subjected to the attentions of criminals, often from their own locality. In such areas many, particularly the elderly, are fearful of leaving their homes.

If I had an Old Master stolen I would be greatly saddened. But my financial loss would be ameliorated by my insurers. I would not be overcome by a pervasive sense of despair such as that which infects the lives of the people cited above.

Yours faithfully,
P. G. SMITH,
Rainbow's End, Cock Lane,
Southend Bradfield,
Reading, Berkshire,
February 18.

From Mr Nick Eadon

Sir, There is a wealth of research evidence, supported by professionals in the field, that measures to reduce crime and criminality should be founded on programmes which firstly make crime harder to commit and secondly influence the motivation of offenders and potential offenders.

Harsher sentencing policy attracts cheap applause, fulfils the emotions and maybe wins elections; but it disregards reason, reality and the longer-term consequences of implementing such legislation.

Yours faithfully,
NICK EADON
(Probation Officer),
Suffolk Probation Service,
34 Foundation Street,
Ipswich, Suffolk,
February 20.

Dietary differences

From Professor Emeritus

W. G. Chaloner, FRS, and
Professor J. B. Pridham

Sir, It would be difficult to find scientific evidence to support many of the recommendations made in the two articles on natural ways to achieve good health (February 17 and 18). The value of fruits and vegetables as part of a balanced diet is not in doubt. However, we would urge caution to the point of consulting a medical practitioner in the case of some of the listed regimens, particularly the "monofasts".

For example, a 21-day monofast of watermelons would provide only a very small fraction of the normal dietary requirements and for some, perhaps many, individuals would not be recommended.

Yours sincerely,
W. G. CHALONER,
J. B. PRIDHAM,
Royal Holloway University
of London,
School of Biological Sciences,
Egham, Surrey,
February 19.

continue to suffer unnecessarily in quarantine and over 100 will die there every year.

What political calculation can justify a block on consideration of safer alternatives?

Yours sincerely,
MARY FRETWELL,
(Chairman), Passports for Pets,
20 Seymour Road, SW18,
February 25.

Gulf War

That deterrent remains as potent to Israel's defence now as it did then. Revelation of the means and its precise capability can only constitute the gravest of threats to the nation's security. Acts of treason of similar gravity have led to the imposition of the death penalty in the United States and Great Britain.

Although one cannot criticise Mr Neil for publishing what amounted to a major scoop in *The Sunday Times*, one wonders whether he warned Mr Vanunu at the time of the likely consequences of his actions.

Mr Vanunu's rightful conviction, sentence and denial of a pardon receive the support not only of Israel's right-wing Likud but also of the Labour Opposition.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID HAROUNOFF
4 King's Bench Walk, Temple, EC4.

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P. D. HALE,
21 Wilson Street, EC2,
February 27.

مذا من راحل

OBITUARIES

BRIGADIER DAME MARY TYRWHITT

Brigadier Dame Mary Tyrwhitt, DBE, TD, Director of the Women's Royal Army Corps, 1949-50, died on February 13 aged 93. She was born on December 27, 1903.

THE founder-director of the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) when it was formed in 1949, Mary Tyrwhitt played an inspirational role in ensuring the future of women in the British Army. The WRAC sprang out of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) which had proved itself in the years of the Second World War.

But in the postwar period it was not a foregone conclusion that a women's corps had a role to play. At a time of uncertainty and doubt for the ATS, it was her advice to the Army Council and her faith in a continuing women's role in the Army that helped to bring the WRAC into being.

Although she did not herself join the ATS until she was almost 35, Mary Joan Caroline Tyrwhitt came

from a thoroughly martial family — albeit naval, not military. Her father, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt, had made his reputation during the First World War as commander of the celebrated Harwich Force of cruisers and destroyers, which was renowned for its buccaneering spirit in constant clashes with the enemy.

Her brother, Admiral Sir St John Tyrwhitt, who died at the relatively early age of 56, was a Second World War destroyer commander and Second Sea Lord from 1959 to 1961. Mary Tyrwhitt was therefore brought up much in the traditions of the Senior Service, and as a young girl she travelled the world with her parents.

As war clouds gathered, and it was apparent that, as they had in the First World War, women were going to have to play a role again, she joined the ATS on November 11, 1938, twenty years to the day after the Armistice. The ATS had been established two months earlier on September 9, its purpose, to

provide women auxiliaries to release Territorial soldiers for active service in the event of war.

She soon proved herself to be an officer of outstanding ability. Her first task was to raise a platoon at Cranbrook, Kent, which was affiliated to The Royal East Kent Regiment (The Buffs).

On the outbreak of war she was in charge, first, of general duties personnel and, early in 1940, was appointed company commander in charge of cooks, clerks and orderlies at Chatham. She was then appointed to be an instructor at the first ATS Junior Officers' School.

This was followed by appointments as chief instructor and the commandant of the NCOs' School (then located at Royal Holloway College in Egham, Surrey) with the rank of Chief Commander. After senior appointments on the staff and on regimental duty, she became Deputy Director ATS as a Controller, and in 1946 took over from Dame Leslie Whately as Director.

She was immediately faced with the responsibility of advising the Army Council on the possible formation of a new corps of women as part of the Regular Army. It had to be decided to what extent this new corps should be governed by the normal regulations of the Army. There was a good deal of discussion, in which Mary Tyrwhitt played an important part, and it was not until February 1, 1949, that the new corps came into being. Senior Controller, Mary Tyrwhitt became the first Director, Women's Royal Army Corps, in the rank of Brigadier, retiring a year later.

She was appointed OBE in 1946 and DBE in 1949. She was awarded the Territorial Decoration in 1950. She held the appointment of Hon ADC to King George VI from 1949 to 1950.

She retired in 1951, but remained as a member of the WRAC Council for the following three years and also became President of the ATS Dinner Club — an appointment

which she enjoyed for many years.

She had served in the Army for more than 12 years and in her retirement joined the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and became an assistant regional administrator in the Southern Region until 1965. She lived for many years in Pewsey, Wiltshire, before moving finally to Tiddington near Stamford-on-Avon.

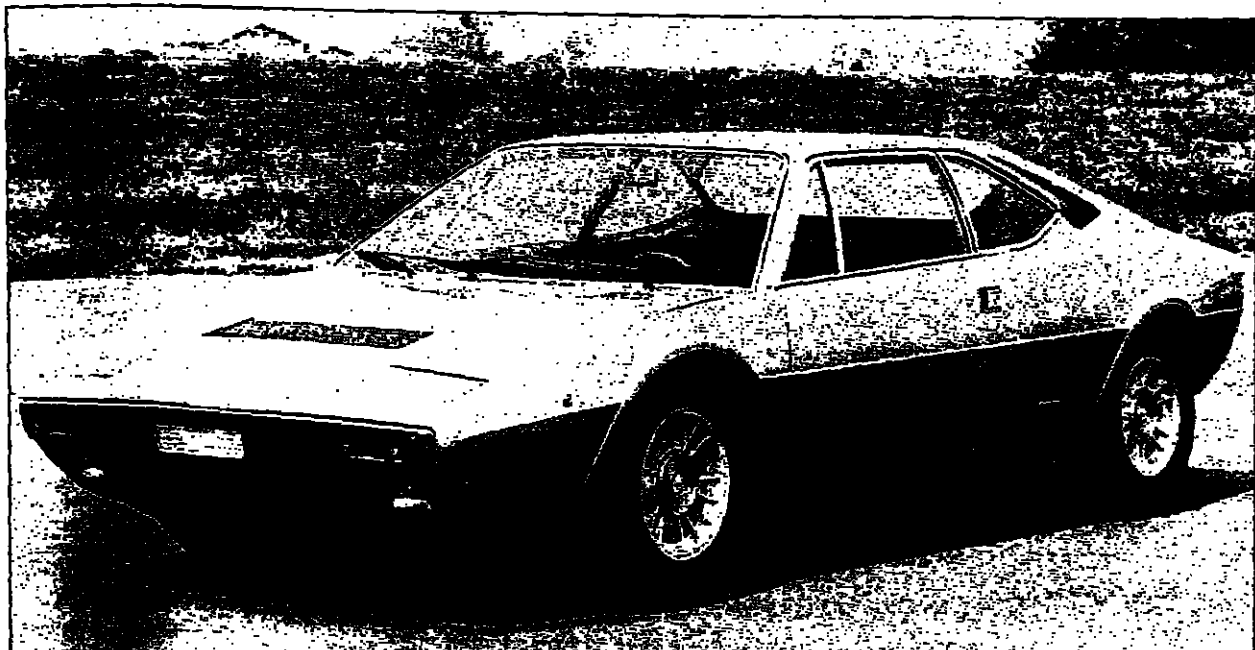
Always interested in the progress of the WRAC, she kept in touch with the corps throughout the years. In 1988, although by then in her eighties, she was very happy to become ATS representative on the committee formed to arrange the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Service.

In that year she travelled up to London for the many meetings, insisted on doing all the tiring walking around the Barbican and gave her fellow members of the committee the greatest pleasure by her unfailing interest, enthusiasm and humour.

She was unmarried.



NUCCIO BERTONE



Guided missile on four wheels: Bertone's Ferrari Dino 308GT of 1976

Nuccio Bertone, Italian car body designer, died in Turin on February 26 aged 62. He was born on July 23, 1934.

WITH their characteristic wedge-shaped body shells, the designs of Nuccio Bertone were familiar in several generations of the world's best known high-performance cars from the 1950s onwards. The list of manufacturers for which he designed the carrozzeria (coachwork) reads like a roll of the most famous names in the world of Italian motor sport, though he also designed for companies outside Italy.

Fiat, Alfa Romeo, and Lancia were all among his customers at one time or another. He had also created car bodies for Opel, Volvo and Citroën.

Nuccio Bertone was born into the car body-making world in the heartland of the Italian automotive industry,

Turin. His father had founded his firm Bertone Carrozzeria two years before his son's birth, and as soon as he was able, Bertone junior entered the business. At that stage the company was a family coachwork firm, but after the war Nuccio Bertone set about transforming it from a business conducted on an artisan

scale into a sophisticated industrial plant, capable of operating in international markets.

He gradually took car design away from the rounded forms that were the norm in the postwar years to produce something more angular. His first important body design, the Alfa Romeo Giulietta Sprint, appeared in 1954; only 500 were manufactured for the first production run, but the design became so popular that in the end 40,000 were built.

After that, Bertone was into his stride with the Fiat 850 Spider and the Fiat 127, which showed his angular characteristics. The evolution of the Bertone style continued from the late 1960s onwards with the Ferrari Dino 308 GT4, and in the series of Lamborghini — Miura, Espada, Countach — high-speed guided missiles on four wheels, seen to best advantage in the glamorous and dramatic setting of the *corniche*

between Ventimiglia and Nice. The Lancia Stratos, which won the World Rally Championship three years running, was another Bertone standard.

In the 1970s and 1980s Bertone was also involved with Volvo, for which he designed the 262C and the 780. Finally, in the 1990s came his designs for Citroën: the ZX, Xantia and Berlingo. For Opel he had been involved with the Kadet convertible.

From a small family firm Bertone grew and diversified until today the group — which includes the companies Carrozzeria Bertone, Stile Bertone, Tecnodesign and Socar-ics — employs 1,500 workers and has an annual turnover of £450 million (€200 million).

Bertone was married with two daughters. One, Jeanne, an architect by training, is in the firm's creative division; the other, Barbara, an economist, is on the production side.



THEODORE REDPATH

Theodore Redpath, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, died on January 30 aged 83. He was born on August 17, 1913.

A DEVOTED teacher, Theodore Redpath was a distinguished representative of the Cambridge English school. He worked hard and successfully to develop English studies at Trinity, where he was the first Fellow elected in his subject, while also taking his full share in general college and university business.

He exemplified — in an age of increasing specialisation — the humanist ideal of the scholar with all-round interests and abilities. He believed that all forms of art and thought could attract a developing mind, and that all branches of literature could contribute to one another. Above all, he influenced his students deeply because his learning was coupled with strong intellectual integrity and with the belief that literature, English literature in particular, could and should contribute to the enrichment of life.

Robert Theodore Holmes Redpath was born in London and educated in Cambridge. From the Leys School he went to St Catharine's College, which he entered with a Choral Exhibition, to read English. In 1934 he took a starred first in Part II of the Tripos, as well as sharing the Charles Oldham Shakespeare Scholarship. For postgraduate research, however, he turned to philosophy, gaining his PhD in 1940 with a thesis on Leibniz, under the supervision of C. D. Broad.

After his army years, from 1940 to 1946 (which included service in Intelligence), he considered making his career in the law, and was called to the Middle Temple Bar in 1948. But several colleges made heavy demands on him for supervision in English at this period; and in 1950 he was appointed by Trinity to the first teaching fellowship in English at the college. He became a university assistant lecturer in 1951, and a full lecturer in 1954.

He served the university twice as Senior Proctor, in 1954 and 1959, and was a college tutor from 1960 to 1970, besides undertaking other administrative responsibilities for the English Faculty and the Cambridge Union. But it was characteristic of him that he could, in addition, find time and energy for a variety of other interests and pursuits.

He was very sociable and hospitable. He was an unusually gifted linguist, widely read in foreign literatures and

widely travelled in Europe, with a particular attachment to France and Spain. He was also a skilful pianist, a keen gardener and an energetic player of games, notably real tennis, which he helped to foster in the university.

As a student, Redpath was influenced by his admiration for I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis; and he took pride in the acquaintances he formed, as a young man, with Russell, Wittgenstein and G. E. Moore. But he never behaved as anyone's disciple, or restricted himself to a single track of research.

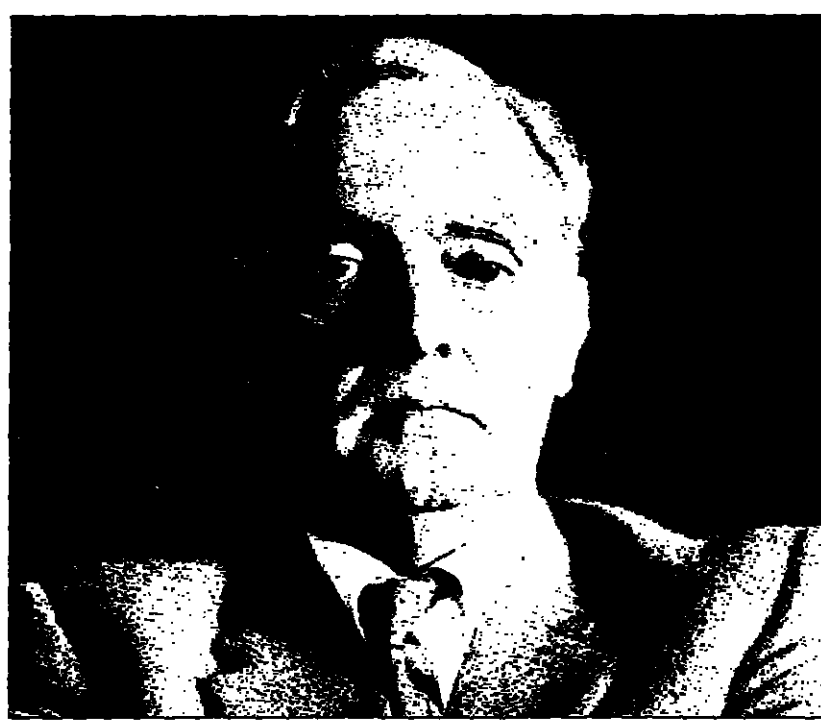
His early training in the close analysis of poetic language is evident in his first book (1956), his annotated edition of *Donne's Songs and Sonnets* (which he later revised and improved), and similarly, in his edition, with W. G. Ingram, of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1964) — though both works show a concern with historical scholarship that might not then have been thought of as typical of "Cambridge English". They are both editions of lasting value to students.

Another of his leading interests, within the history of criticism, is shown by his thoroughly documented introductions to two collections of contemporary reviews

of the English Romantics, the first edited with Patricia Hodgson in 1964 and the second in 1973. He continued to write articles and give papers on philosophical subjects, particularly aesthetics; and he used his knowledge of languages to good effect. He drew on modern Russian scholarship for his short but perceptive book on Tolstoy (1960); and he took pains to make himself familiar with recent philosophical research for his translation of Sophocles, a labour of love.

It was a mark of the esteem in which he was held that Trinity gave a special concert in honour of his 80th birthday. But Redpath's years of retirement were far from passive. He became an entrepreneur in the wine trade; he took on visiting professorships at several universities in France, Germany, America and Japan; he published a lively personal memoir of his friendship with Wittgenstein and a study of Broad's philosophy; he had been working on an analysis of *Hamlet* criticism and more recently on revisions of his translation of Sophocles when he was overtaken by his final illness.

He is survived by his wife, the pianist Sarah Campbell-Taylor, whom he married in 1964, and a son and two daughters.



PROFESSOR ROGER TAYLER

Professor Roger Tayler, OBE, FRS, astrophysicist, died of myeloma on January 23 aged 67. He was born on October 25, 1929.

ROGER TAYLER's PhD thesis on stellar evolution contained some of the first realistic models of how stars evolve as a result of the fusion of hydrogen into helium in their interiors. He obtained all his results on a hand-operated mechanical calculator, taking a month for a series of models which would be produced in a few minutes today.

After a year as a Commonwealth Fund Fellow at Princeton and CalTech, he moved to Harwell in 1955, where he continued to work on problems related to nuclear fusion. At that time there were high

hopes of recreating in the laboratory the same conditions of high temperature and density as occur naturally inside stars and of obtaining a limitless supply of clean energy. The problem then, as now, was to contain the hot plasma without melting the container. Confinement by magnetic fields, which would hold the plasma away from the walls, was believed to be the answer, but the magnetic plasma proved unexpectedly unstable. Independently of parallel work in America and Russia, Tayler wrote a series of fundamental papers studying the problem of stabilising the fields; much of his work remains relevant today.

Tayler was educated at Solihull School, and Clare College, Cambridge, graduating in 1950 and staying on to work

for his PhD under Hermann Bondi. In 1961 Fred Hoyle persuaded him to return from Harwell to Cambridge, where he was a Fellow of Corpus Christi College.

During this time, he collaborated with Hoyle and with Stephen Hawking on problems of nuclear astrophysics and cosmology. He developed an abiding interest in the origin of all the chemical elements, and was present in stressing the sensitivity of the amount of light elements produced in the early Universe to the precise value of the neutron half-life and to the number of types of neutrino.

Tayler was appointed Professor of Astronomy at the University of Sussex in 1967. He was an outstanding Director of the Astronomy Centre for three six-year stints.

His early work on magnetic stability in hot plasmas was later applied in a very interesting way to magnetic stars, and he continued to work on stellar evolution, nuclear astrophysics and cosmology. Most recently, he turned to a study of the chemical evolution of galaxies.

Tayler was successively secretary, treasurer and president of the Royal Astronomical Society. He was appointed OBE in 1990 and elected FRS in 1995.

His many books, especially *The Stars: Their Structure and Evolution* (1970) and *Galaxies: Structure and Evolution* (1978), were much used by several generations of students. His presidential lecture was turned into a book, *The Sun as a Star* (1996). He is survived by his wife Moya.

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OPENING OF THE NEW CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT

THE SUNDAY TIMES

ON THIS DAY

February 28, 1907

THE ARCHITECT WAS EDWARD MOUNTFORD; THE FIGURE OF JUSTICE ABOVE THE DOME AND THE SCULPTURED FIGURES ABOVE THE MAIN ENTRANCE WERE THE WORK OF F.W.POMEROY. THE COST WAS ABOUT £300,000. DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR THE BUILDING WAS TWICE HIT BY BOMBS.

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the new Central Criminal Court ... The building which we shall presently examine with the greatest interest is not only of handsome exterior, but is, I am confident, admirably fitted in every way for the purpose for which it is designed. The great increase in the population of the metropolitan area which has taken place in the last half century renders the old buildings far too confined for the proper performance of the duties for which they were at one time adequate; and this noble edifice, erected by the City of London entirely at its own expense, will, I am sure, amply fulfil its high purpose by giving convenience and dignity to the administration of justice in the interests, not only of the inhabitants of its immediate district, but of the vast urban population that has accumulated in the adjacent counties. The old buildings which have now been replaced were, however, of high historical interest, for they witnessed during the century of their existence a change in the administration of criminal justice far greater than has taken place in any preceding century. The barbarous penal code which was deemed necessary 100 years ago has gradually been replaced in the progress towards a higher civilization by laws breathing a more humane spirit and aiming at a nobler purpose. (Cherry) ...

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THE TIMES

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

M&S lays out plans for £400m overseas shops spree

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

MARKS & SPENCER is to open its largest franchise store next month and is planning an ambitious £400 million programme of store openings around the world over the next three years.

The new 31,000 sq ft Istanbul store is the second to be opened there and is four times the size of the existing store. It will open on March 21 and will be run by Turkpetrol

Holdings, M&S's Turkish franchise partner.

Keith Oates, deputy chairman of Marks & Spencer, said: "We have really pressed the accelerator on overseas expansion." In Europe, new openings are likely in Luxembourg and Belgium, while in Germany, where the first Marks & Spencer store opened last year, Mr Oates foresees 20 to 30 stores, with one in each major city.

Openings and store expansions

are also set to continue in the UK and, because it prefers to own the freehold on its UK stores, spending on expansion is set to remain higher in the UK than abroad.

Overseas, the company is studying the Latin American market. First openings there are likely to be in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru, followed possibly by Mexico. Taiwan is under consideration and, three years after deciding it was too expensive, a team has gone to Japan

to look at possible sites. The company has also opened an office in Shanghai. But Mr Oates said that it is keen not to move into China too soon, and not before customers have sufficient spending power.

Mr Oates, who last night delivered the annual UK Innovation Lecture, which is sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry, the Confederation of British Industry and others, told the audience that Marks & Spencer is likely to

have 120 franchise stores in 32 countries in four years from now.

There are now 86 franchises in 24 countries. The company has recently announced plans to open franchises in the Arab Gulf and in Australia. The next wave of overseas openings is likely to comprise a mixture of franchises and company-owned stores.

In his speech last night, Mr Oates said that franchising had been adopted because "globalisation of

retailing means that we wanted to expand abroad quickly, but we had to find the right way to be successful in difficult markets. We will eventually trade in Japan, China, India and Latin America but, for different reasons, in each case the timing has not been quite right yet."

Mr Oates said that Russia and former Soviet republics were not yet included in the overseas expansion plans. But he added: "We will be in those places in ten or 15 years' time."

Abbey National to table formal bid for ScotAm

By ROBERT MILLER
BANKING
CORRESPONDENT

ABBEY National, the retail high street bank that yesterday reported a 20 per cent rise in annual pre-tax profits to £1.3 billion, will today table its formal bid for Scottish Amicable, the mutual insurer.

Lord Tugendhat, chairman of the building society-turned bank, said: "We will be submitting a firm proposal. The next stage will be a discussion period, with final binding proposals to be submitted by a deadline in mid-March. An announcement is likely towards the end of March."

The Abbey chairman declined to say how much his bid was worth but it is believed that it has been raised from its initial sighting shot of £1.4 billion to nearer the rival offer from the Prudential of £1.9 billion. NatWest announced this week that it had withdrawn from bidding because the price was too high.

Abbey National, which lifted its final dividend to 17.4p, payable on May 6, to give a 20 per cent rise in the full-year payout to 26.1p, believes that its "Scottish" card could win the day and more than double its funds under management to £22 billion.

Peter Birch, chief executive of Abbey National, has already pledged that "no Scottish Amicable director will lose their seat on the board even if they oppose us". A similar promise was made — and kept — to Scottish Mutual directors when the Abbey acquired it in 1992. Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, is known to be taking a keen personal interest in the outcome of the ScotAm bid. If



Profitable partnership Peter Birch, left, chief executive of Abbey National, and Lord Tugendhat, chairman, yesterday

the bid were to fail the Abbey indicated that it would look elsewhere and market speculation has it that its next target could be Norwich Union, which plans to make its stock market debut in the summer. In 1996 the Abbey saw earnings per share increase by 16 per cent to 59.8p, but that was excluding the £61 million integration costs arising from last year's takeover of the National & Provincial Building Society (N&P). The target of driving up to half of the

group's profits from businesses outside of the core savings and loan market by the year 2000 continued on track at around 42 per cent. The consumer credit division chipped in a 100 per cent profit increase at £98 million, while life assurance business was up 44 per cent to £151 million and Treasury and offshore managed an 18 per cent hike to £256 million.

On the more traditional front the Abbey increased the number of bank accounts by

about 113,000, to 1.6 million, and since the launch of its own-branded credit card in February last year has opened 115,000 accounts, added to which are some 331,000 former N&P accounts. After the co-operation agreement signed last November with Safeway, the UK's third-largest retailer, to give access to the supermarket's 6 million ABC loyalty card holders, the Abbey will next week launch a new initiative linked to Safeway's card holders. Lord

Tugendhat said: "This will be followed by a debit card, a credit card, and eventually by in-store banking. The arrangement will be a key factor in substantially increasing our market share of banking, credit and debit card customers by 1999."

The market has come to expect "solid" results from the Abbey and the shares closed up 4.4p last night, at 768p.

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Societies Bill set to be law before election

By ROBERT MILLER

THE long-delayed Building Societies Bill is finally to be laid before Parliament today and is expected to become law before the general election.

With the backing of Mike O'Brien, Shadow Economic Secretary to the Treasury, the Bill, which will give building societies more freedom to expand into new areas such as general insurance, is expected to pass through the Commons unopposed.

Labour, however, will put forward an amendment to have a clause inserted on a two-year rule to discourage so-called "carpetbaggers" from making a quick profit should a society shed its mutual status and become a bank. Mr O'Brien said: "We want to stop mere speculators from benefiting from conversions and that is why we think only members of two or more years' standing should receive bonuses. On the question of conversion, that it a matter for members."

The most controversial clause in the Bill, put forward by Angela Knight, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, concerns the five-year protection against hostile takeovers afforded to societies that be-

come public companies. The new Bill will remove that protection, but only if a new bank makes a takeover bid for "any authorised financial institution".

Christopher Rodrigues, the chief executive of the Bradford & Bingley, which welcomed the Bill, said: "We do not see why converted societies should enjoy a protection which no other public company is afforded."

Brian Davis, the chief executive of the Nationwide, which is soon to become the United Kingdom's largest building society, said: "When it becomes law, the new Building Societies Act will benefit millions of customers."

"It will enable Nationwide, and all other building societies committed to remaining mutual, to continue to provide strong competition which benefits consumers."

Mr Davis added: "Importantly, it will also remove the unfair anomaly which currently allows the converting societies to embark upon an aggressive acquisition programme, whilst at the same time protecting them from takeover for five years."

B & W payout, page 24

ABN Amro director admits offering a job to Horlick

By ROBERT MILLER

A SENIOR director of ABN Amro has confirmed that the Dutch bank approached Nicola Horlick, the former Morgan Grenfell fund manager, with a job offer.

Rijkman van Tets, a member of the managing board of ABN Amro, which yesterday unveiled annual pre-tax profits up 25 per cent to £1.6 billion, is the first director to confirm formally that the bank held talks with Ms Horlick. However, he denied trying to poach Ms Horlick's team from Morgan Grenfell. Ms Horlick was suspended from her job last month amid allegations by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell that she breached her contract by trying to persuade her successful fund



Horlick suspended

management team to join her. She left saying she had been constructively dismissed. Mr van Tets said: "I had a meeting with Ms Horlick about her herself and not her

team. I am not a believer in poaching teams and I would never have done that. Nor would I try to disrupt their business."

Ms Horlick told *The Times* last night: "I did meet Rijkman van Tets unexpectedly at the Lanesborough Hotel in London on the evening of Wednesday January 8. He basically said that he would like me to run the global asset management business of ABN Amro." The former Morgan Grenfell fund manager said Mr van Tets had been concerned because "he did not want to upset Deutsche Bank as he felt it could jeopardise the working relationship between the two banks after the introduction of a single European currency."

Carlton in running to buy Rank films

By ERIC REGULY AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

CARLTON Communications, the ITV company, has emerged as one of the leading contenders for Rank's film distribution business.

Carlton would not confirm or deny that it was among the bidders for the business, which was officially placed on the auction block last week. But sources familiar with the sales effort said that Carlton, whose chairman is Michael Green, is in the running.

Analysts have predicted that the price tag could reach £100 million. But Rank has dampened expectations by pointing out that the rights to many of the more popular films in the library have already been sold. The business, which has a book value

of £22 million, could go for as little as £50 million.

The Rank catalogue is best known for the Ealing comedies, the Carry On films and other classics, such as the original *The 39 Steps* and Lord Olivier's *Henry V*. Recent successes include *Strictly Ballroom* and *The Madness of King George III*.

Rank's film distribution business is expected to be sold by the late spring. Carlton and Hampton Trust, the property developer, want to build a £200 million glass-domed leisure complex on the six-acre site occupied by Central Television Studios next to the Alpha Tower and the Crown Plaza hotel in Birmingham city centre.

RTZ-CRA harks back to Rio Tinto roots

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE
IN SYDNEY

RTZ-CRA is turning the clock back more than 100 years in the quest for a new corporate identity. The mining company is seeking shareholders' permission to change its name back to Rio Tinto, a name first used in 1873.

Rio Tinto, or red-wine coloured river, was floated on the London Stock

Exchange in 1873 to acquire and redevelop the ancient Rio Tinto copper mines in southern Spain.

The present dual-listed structure of RTZ-CRA, resulting from the 1995 merger, will be maintained but Rio Tinto will become the name for the unified group. The name change, however, met with outrage in Australia's financial community which regard it as another example of RTZ ex-

erting its influence over CRA, which has its roots as Comrade Riointo of Australia formed in 1962 from the merger of Consolidated Zinc and the Rio Tinto Mining Company of Australia.

One analyst said: "People will see this as another indication that RTZ is flexing its muscle and it will fuel the belief that the merger was really just a disguised back door takeover of CRA by RTZ."

Yesterday RTZ-CRA reported a 15 per cent drop in full-year net profits to \$1.1 billion for the year to December, in line with expectations. Much of the fall in RTZ-CRA's profits for the year to December was due to lower metal prices and production problems at some of its larger operations. The total dividend rises from 31.5p to 31.71p.

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Investors in B&W to get £1,100

By CAROLINE MERRELL

SAVERS with the Bristol & West Building Society for more than two years will get a cash payout worth an average £1,100 under the terms of the £600 million takeover by the Bank of Ireland.

Borrowers and those who have been savers for less than two years will get 250 preference shares, estimated to be worth £1 each. The deal, announced on April 14 last year, is expected to go through on July 28 - vesting day.

Details of the takeover will be mailed to the society's one million members on March 7. Two-year savers are those who had £100 in their accounts on April 14, 1996, and who will hold an account continuously from December 31, 1994, until the day before vesting day.

Those that benefit from the preference shares will have access to a free share-dealing facility in the six weeks after the completion of the deal.

The cash will be equivalent to 6.5 per cent of the lower of the two balances on April 14, 1996, and June 25, 1997, and any other day from yesterday until vesting day. A special meeting will be held on April 15 at the Royal Bath & West of England Society Showground, Shepton Mallet.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buy	Bank Sell
Australia \$	2.30	2.04
Austria Sch	20.33	18.83
Belgium Fr	59.65	55.35
Canada \$	2.37	2.17
Cyprus Cyp	0.865	0.800
Denmark Kr	11.08	10.25
Finland Mk	8.77	8.12
France Fr	9.67	9.02
Germany Dr	5.50	5.28
Greece Dr	447	421
Hong Kong \$	10.27	12.27
Ireland £	1.20	1.00
Israel Sh	5.74	5.39
Italy Lit	2085	2080
Japan Yen	211.50	185.50
Malta	0.980	0.935
Netherlands Gld	3.238	3.008
New Zealand \$	2.50	2.28
Norway Kr	11.48	10.80
Portugal Esc	207.00	208.50
S Africa R	7.81	7.54
Spain Ptas	241.00	227.00
Sweden Kr	12.80	12.00
Switzerland Fr	2.50	2.35
Taiwan New	206.00	192.00
USA \$	1.730	1.600

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Richard Giordano, chairman of the recently demerged British Gas which ended its trading life in the red.

British Gas signs off with final-year losses of £571m

By OLIVER AUGUST

BRITISH GAS lost more than £500 million in 1996, its final year as a single entity. At the last official function of the now demerged group, Richard Giordano, the chairman, blamed restructuring costs for turning a £130 million pre-tax profit last year into a £571 million loss.

The group was plunged into the red by exceptional charges totalling more than £1.1 billion in the year to December 31. The renegotiation of two take-over contracts and the losses on long-term gas sales deals accounted for £635 million.

Restructuring prior to demerger, which included halving the workforce to 35,000, cost £424 million. Mr Giordano also acknowledged that the group had to launch a costly fightback against "a fall in our customer service level in the last 18 months". British Gas was overwhelmed for much of last year by customer complaints about billings and cut-offs.

This month, British Gas demerged its gas supply business into a new company, Centrica, and changed the name of its remaining gas

transport and storage business to BG. Centrica had a pre-tax loss of £1 billion last year and BG made a pre-tax profit of £381 million. British Gas shareholders will receive an unchanged dividend of 14.5p a share, due on July 2, but Mr Giordano gave warning that the dividend level is certain to come down over the next few years. Earnings per share of 2.9p last year turned into losses per share of 13p, and in the fourth quarter pre-tax losses amounted to £379 million, compared with a profit of £55 million in

the same period last year. The 1996 results would have been worse if the excessively cold weather had not helped to increase sales. Prices in the commercial and industrial markets are said to be weak.

The group declined to give estimates of expected future losses resulting from the renegotiation of further take-over contracts. It said that talks with the counterparties in those contracts are continuing but no resolution is expected until the end of this year.

BG is now gearing up for a Monopolies and Mergers Commission review, scheduled for April, into the new gas pricing formula proposed by Ofgas, the industry regulator. Philip Hampton, finance director, said: "We have no firm indication that there is any reason for advancement or delay. We're still working on the assumption that it will hit its timetable."

The politically sensitive review could be delayed until May when the general election will have taken place.

Charity link boosts Cantab

SHARES in Cantab Pharmaceuticals yesterday hit a new peak of 900p as the drug development company linked up with the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity to form a new biotechnology company (Paul Durman writes).

Cantab and MCCC will be

joint owners of Phogen, which will aim to develop VP22, a protein from a herpes virus that is potentially a highly effective drug-delivery mechanism. A team at the Marie Curie Research Institute has shown that VP22 is very good at penetrating cell nuclei. The

scientists hope that it could be used to treat a wide range of diseases by delivering peptides, proteins, DNA and even conventional drugs to diseased cells.

Cantab shares rose 27½p to 900p. They began 1996 at 671p after a low of 103p in 1995.

Warning by CBI on Britain's EMU line

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITISH business may be at risk if "Europhobia" on a single currency damages UK firms' access to European markets, the Confederation of British Industry will say today.

The message comes after warnings from a number of companies, including British Aerospace, Unilever and Toyota, over Britain detaching itself from Europe over economic and monetary union.

While business remains undecided about whether Britain should join a single currency, UK companies, especially exporters, believe no step should be taken that would damage their ability to operate in the EU single market.

Adair Turner, CBI Director-General, will tell business leaders that the UK needs a prosperous Europe in which it can flourish economically. He will say: "We cannot afford to let Europhobia rule."

Speaking at a business breakfast in Cardiff, Mr Turner will say that if Britain decides not to be part of the first wave of EMU, the tone it strikes will be crucial.

If, even after deciding not to join a single currency early, Britain takes a "positive approach" to it and genuinely keeps open the option of joining subsequently, then UK firms' access to the single market is unlikely to be affected.

"But if we stay out amid triumphalist assertions of our superiority and against a background of a wider Europhobia, rubbing our hands with glee at Europe's problems, we could risk isolation."

To do that would see Britain's views go unheeded, and its influence diminish. "Ultimately, our access to the single market could be at risk - to our enormous economic disadvantage."

Although CBI leaders have been attacked by Conservative Euro-sceptics for being too pro-European, Mr Turner will emphasise the benefits EU membership brings to business. He will point out that rather than Europe being an "economic disaster", income per head in Europe has grown faster than that in the US for the past 20 years and Europe's export performance remains strong.

Railway firm to cut jobs, say protesters

A PRIVATISED rail company plans to lay off about 1,400 staff at the two passenger rail franchises that it was awarded during privatisation, it was claimed yesterday. Campaigners against the sell-off said that MTL Trust Holdings, a bus company based in Liverpool, would cut more than 1,000 jobs from Regional Railways North East (RRNE), about 40 per cent of the workforce, and 350 from Merseyrail. Save Our Railways, a public transport pressure group that received leaked extracts from MTL's bid documentation revealing the planned redundancies, said that the cuts "would leave the railway horrendously understaffed".

MTL, which is to take over the RRNE franchise on Sunday, said that it was too early for it to comment on the exact numbers of jobs that would be lost, but it admitted that "by the end of the franchise term there will be a reduction in the level of staffing".

Partco drives ahead

PARTCO, the car parts distribution group, is paying £103 million for Brown Brothers, the UK's leading supplier of paint to car bodyshops, which it is funding in part by a rights issue that will raise £68.8 million. Partco also announced annual pre-tax profits of £10.4 million, or £11.6 million before restructuring costs, up from £7.5 million. Underlying earnings rose 22.3 per cent to 22.5p a share. A final dividend of 5.5p, due on May 30, makes a total of 8p, up 14.3 per cent. *Tempos, page 26*

Icahn out of Nabisco

CARL ICAHN, the US investor, has raised about \$731 million with the sale of his shares in RJR Nabisco and has apparently abandoned his year-long effort to break up the food and tobacco company. Mr Icahn unloaded his stake of 19.9 million shares at \$36.75 a share, in a sale brokered by Goldman Sachs. The stake was equal to about 7.3 per cent of RJR Nabisco, whose products include Winston and Salem cigarettes, Oreo cookies, Ritz crackers and Lifesavers candy.

ITT to expand hotels

ITT CORP, seeking to thwart a hostile \$6.5 billion bid from Hilton Hotels Corp, has announced plans to add 28 hotels to its core Sheraton business. The move was the second by ITT since it rejected Hilton's offer earlier this month and said it may sell non-core assets to focus on hotel and casino operations. ITT has sold nearly half its 5 per cent stake in Alcatel Alsthom, the French telecommunications company and is expected to sell its 50 per cent stake in the Madison Square Garden properties.

Whessoe bid success

THE joint Norwegian and Swiss break-up bid for Whessoe, the instrumentation company, headed towards victory yesterday when Siebe, the engineering group, said it would not increase its £46 million offer. Navia of Norway and Endress & Hauser of Switzerland, which are bidding £52.5 million, bought a further 4.44 million shares to lift their stake in Whessoe to 25.6 per cent. Siebe said it could not justify lifting its offer of 155p a share. Whessoe is expected to back the 175p bid from Navia and E&H.

Citicorp bonus is cut

JOHN REED, chairman of Citicorp, the US merchant bank, saw his bonus cut to \$2 billion in 1996, from \$3 billion in each of the two previous years. The annual report shows that his basic pay rose to \$1.5 million in 1996, from \$1.30 million in 1995 and \$1.28 million in 1994. His 1996 bonus was 75 per cent cash, with the rest in shares. Mr Reed exercised options to buy 679,000 shares in 1996, with \$40.1 million in "value realised", the market value of common stock acquired minus exercise price.

Akzo considers offer

AKZO NOBEL, the diversified Dutch chemicals company, said yesterday that it was considering making an offer for Unichema International and Croscil, two of the four specialised chemicals businesses offered for sale by Unilever. Akzo was reporting 1996 net profits little changed at 1.32 billion guilders (about £427 million) on sales up 4 per cent to 22.4 billion guilders. The company said higher profits in pharmaceuticals and coatings were offset by falls in chemicals and fibres.

Linotype-Hell merges

ONE of the oldest names in the British printing industry is to disappear, with the loss of nearly 100 jobs. Linotype-Hell, of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, is to merge with Heidelberg Graphic Equipment, the German printing machine company that acquired a controlling interest last November. Linotype operations are to move to Heidelberg's UK headquarters in Brentford, west London, and to its offices in Tarnworth and Leeds. Most of the job losses will be at Cheltenham.

BTP acquisition

BTP, the UK chemicals group, has agreed to acquire PCR, a fine chemicals manufacturer, from Harris Specialty Chemicals Inc for \$72.3 million. PCR specialises in organosilicon and fluorine chemistry, and provides specific manufacturing capabilities and a range of fine chemicals. PCR's manufacturing facilities are based in Florida and Puerto Rico. PCR earned operating profits of £6.3 million. PCR will be integrated into BTP's biocides and fine chemicals division.

Memory's loss deepens

MEMORY CORPORATION, the memory chip producer, has done a deal with Sun Microsystems of Japan to help it to escape the volatile microchip market. Memory, which is switching from selling repaired dram microchips to licensing technology for repairs, said that Sun Microsystems will arrange at least two licensing contracts a year from 1998. Memory made a £4.5 million pre-tax loss last year (£1.95 million loss previously) after a collapse in the price of perfect chips hit the market for repaired ones.

Bundesbank chief warns on wrong signal for union

By OLIVER AUGUST

THE Bundesbank, in its most sceptical note on monetary union in months, yesterday said Europe has not escaped the vicious circle of excessive government debt and upward pressure on interest rates.

Hans Tietmeyer, Bundesbank president, said most countries were still hemmed in by debts and deficits, threatening stability of the single currency. He said: "The vicious circle of indebtedness and higher interest rate burdens are crowding out other tasks and lead to ever higher taxes."

Speaking in Frankfurt to marketmakers at Goldman Sachs, he said the single currency had yet to win confidence. An easing of the fiscal requirements for monetary union membership would "send the wrong signal" and would create the illusion that the current state of public finances was acceptable.

Herr Tietmeyer agreed European exchange rates had become more stable but insisted the existing institutional structures set out in the Maastricht treaty were not sufficient to prevent a resurgence of inflation.

He said: "Is an independent European central bank not enough to achieve price stability? This question has to be answered with an unequivocal 'nein', in my opinion."

He acknowledged that however independent, central bankers are still subject to public pressures. He said: "Therefore it is necessary that finance ministers in all member countries regain control [over their budgets] and commit themselves to achieving stability."



Tietmeyer: sceptical

Castle consortium planning to tower over rivals

BBC transmitters in new hands

By ERIC REGULY

CASTLE Transmission Services, the group that is to be confirmed today as new owner of the BBC transmitter network, will use the acquisition as a springboard for media infrastructure developments worldwide. It also plans to spend as much as £200 million on upgrading the service for digital terrestrial TV.

In its first privatisation, the BBC sold the system, which transmits all of the BBC's radio and TV signals, for more than £240 million. Strong competition from bidders, including Securicor, Mercury Asset Management and NTL, the owner of the ITV companies' transmission network, ensured that the price was higher than expected.

Virginia Bottomley, the National Heri-

tag Secretary, said at a media conference yesterday that the proceeds from the sale will be used by the BBC to launch digital TV services, giving the viewer the choice of dozens of channels.

Castle Transmission is a consortium of Castle Tower, a transmission tower construction company in America, Berkshire Partners, a Boston investment firm, Candover Investments of Britain, and France Telecom. Ted Miller, 45, the millionaire Texan who is chief executive of Castle Tower, is to become chief executive of the British company.

Mr Miller will run a business with few risk factors and considerable opportunity for expansion. The BBC has agreed to remain an analogue client for 10 years and all the mobile-phone companies, including Vodafone and Orange, use the

network. Growth will come probably on the digital and overseas fronts.

Mr Miller said that Castle, with the help of an army of BBC and France Telecom engineers, will soon begin to convert the BBC network to allow the transmission of digital signals. It will then compete with NTL to supply digital services to the BBC, ITV, Channels 4 and 5 and British Digital Broadcasting, the digital TV consortium formed by Carlton, Granada and BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster.

Mr Miller believes that the potential for overseas growth is enormous. "Our objective is to become the largest infrastructure company in the world for broadcasting and telephony," he said. "The BBC will be our platform to launch into the international market."



She's fifteen and pregnant. Should one have an abortion?



He's in constant pain from cancer. Should he take an overdose?

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Her husband's having an affair. Should she walk out?

British raise £2 venture

Liberty plan expand port

SPEC FOR

□ Long silence over Mirror flotation inquiry □ Integrity checks out at Safeway □ Not much profit in prudence for the Abbey

Unmasked Maxwell questions

AS A MAN who appears so regularly on television, Michael Heseltine knows a thing or two about cosmetic exercises. This is what he was accused of perverting when, as President of the Board of Trade, he appointed inspectors to investigate the flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers. Now, more than four and a half years later, and assuming, for a moment, a Labour election victory, there seems to be little chance of this report being completed while Mr Heseltine is still a member of Her Majesty's Government, never mind published.

But one could ask Heza's successor, Ian Lang, what on earth is going on. The investigation was launched seven months after Robert Maxwell's death in November 1991 and in the teeth of a Serious Fraud Office investigation that everyone knew would lead to prosecutions. So clearly a report could not be published while the court case was outstanding.

It is now more than four months since everyone accused walked free at the end of the trial, yet there still seems to be no progress. Usually, draft criticisms are sent to those being investigated by the inspectors. Although something approaching that happened about a year ago, those who received the rambling conclusions have

heard nothing since. Perhaps the inspectors want to do a little more research; they now hope to question those whom judge and jury have cleared. It appears that Kevin Maxwell is now about to be questioned. Up to now, the inspectors may have been a little nervous about approaching him, because he has shown an adept knowledge of both the legal system and the art of publicity.

No doubt he has scrutinised the European Court of Human Rights ruling on the Ernest Saunders case to make sure just what the DTI's men can and cannot force him to disclose. But you clearly have no chance of completing an authoritative report into the Mirror float without speaking to the one living person who knew most about how the Maxwell empire worked — or did not.

So far, the investigation into the Maxwell case has found no one guilty of criminal charges, no one guilty of misleading the market over the share support operation and no one guilty of failing to disclose vital information about how much of a mess Maxwell was in.

At present, Mirror shares stand 60 per cent above the float price. The pensioners swindled by Maxwell have had their pensions guaranteed in full — those that did not die before-hand. A small number of very unfortunate victims of various legal loopholes have lost out financially; the damage was mainly absorbed by the big City institutions.

Perhaps the DTI has reasoned that there is no case to answer? In which case the Maxwell affair will turn out to be that *rara avis*, a crime with lots of victims, most of whom were compensated, but no perpetrators.

Honest day's shopping

□ NEVER let it be said that this column only brings bad news. We now provide statistical proof to restore one's faith in human nature. People are honest.

The proof comes from Safeway, well ahead of its rivals in allowing customers to check off the goods in their trolleys themselves rather than queuing for a



till. A handy gizmo called Shop and Go is available at more than a quarter of the company's near 400 stores to be carried around and run along the bar codes on each item bought.

This is presented at the check-out, and the customer pays the total registered. The opportunities for shoplifting are obvious: an undeclared bottle of Scotch or joint of meat can take a hefty percentage off the weekly shopping bill. So Safeway institutes random checks, a little like that occasional tap on the shoulder that used to trouble you when you went through the green channel at Customs.

Anyone whose bills are out of line with the contents of their trolley can expect to be checked

next time, this information being registered on their loyalty card, and if they are consistently underpaying they can expect to be told to shop elsewhere. But they will not be prosecuted for shoplifting, Safeway making the assumption that they have made an honest mistake.

Cynics might expect that random checks would turn up a larger number of people with trolleys worth more than the value of their gizmos, that is, about to be undercharged, than with less and so in danger of overpaying. That was the suggestion from other food retailers, some of who are now experimenting with systems of their own while Safeway rolls the gizmo out in more stores.

But the figures gathered over the 18 months the system has been in operation show only a tiny and statistically insignificant percentage swing. This is surprising because, unless you are intending to be a regular Safeway shopper, the self-checking system makes occasional shoplifting quite easy. There is a small chance of being caught, and no chance of being punished

— a bit like most other forms of crime, come to think of it. But the huge majority of people are still honest. Enjoy your day.

Getting rid of one Abbey habit

□ ALMOST through the banks' reporting season, and a bumpy ride it has been. Two of the biggest, NatWest and Barclays, saw sharp, and not always justified, share price falls. The market may not have fallen out of love with the sector, but it is certainly becoming more choosy. Those analysts not worried about bad loans if the economy slows are worried about the threat from the supermarkets.

Now Abbey National, whose own figures for 1996 received a grudging thumbs up from the market yesterday, wants more than half of profits to come from non-traditional sources by the end of the decade, even if Scottish Amicable slips from its grasp. Last year these operations, including insurance, consumer credit, treasury and offshore businesses, managed 40 per

cent, so the plan seems achievable. It is also understandable once you look at the Abbey's traditional business of lending on mortgages.

This ever-so-prudent business managed to raise net lending, stripping out the extra business gained by the National & Provincial, by just 2.4 per cent. The company claims to be moving away from discounted mortgages while cutting out cash-backs for customers who are remortgaging, only using this largely discredited perk to gain new business. But the cost of mortgage discounts and cash-backs still doubled to £187 million between 1995 and 1996. So much for prudence.

Back to the future

□ THE pendulum swings, and swings back again. Just as the British Gas name disappears in favour of a brutalised BG, so RTZ is reborn in all its glory as Rio Tinto. Could this be the start of a grand VWP ad men might not take to being rebranded as Wire & Plastic Products, but could British Oxygen Corporation again play its trade untruncated? Imperial Chemical Industries may be politically incorrect, but why not London & Scottish Marine Oil? Could we please, please have back British insulated Callender's Cables?

British Land to raise £220m for venture with GUS

By CARL MORTIMER

BRITISH LAND is raising £220 million in a share issue to fund its investment in a billion pound retail property joint venture with Great Universal Stores.

The property group, run by John Ribbit, is spending £200 million for a half interest in a portfolio of high street shops currently owned by GUS and valued at £960 million.

The joint venture is to be financed with £400 million of equity and £560 million of debt but, for a period of about a year, GUS is financing the

venture by taking a £500 million loan note in return for injecting the properties into the joint venture. On completion the retailer will also be paid £200 million by British Land for its share of the equity. Funding will be sought from banks on a non-recourse basis to repay the GUS loan in due course.

GUS will receive interest on the loan and the joint venture agreement ensures that the retailer's property income in the first year will be equivalent to that of the previous year.

Net rental income from the properties totals £70.8 million.

GUS said yesterday that it was selling the portfolio because it lacked the management team to make the assets perform well. British Land will receive a £1 million fee for running the joint venture, as well as its share of the equity.

The GUS properties, which are mainly freehold, comprise several shopping centres, including The Forge in Glasgow and the St Nicholas Centre in Aberdeen, as well as some offices, but 77 per cent of the portfolio is high street shops spread across the country.

The GUS portfolio will substantially boost British Land's retail portfolio, which is currently biased towards food superstores. John Weston Smith, finance director of British Land, said that a number of the properties would be sold and that performance could be improved by trading, buying in freeholds and selling sites to occupiers.

"High street shops are very much a growth area. With restrictions on out-of-town planning we think that this is a good place to invest," he said.

British Land is issuing 42.8 million shares at 520p each in a vendor placing to institutions. The joint venture has no time limit but British Land pointed out that the subordinated debt has a seven-year life. Each party has a right of first refusal if the other wishes to sell its interest in the joint venture.

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Sitting more comfortably: Nigel Potter, finance director, left, Claes Hultman and Alan Coppin, chief executive

Euro 96 brings a final to Wembley

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE SUCCESS of the European football championships helped Wembley to return to profit last year, ensuring the company can pay its first dividend for four years. The leisure company reported full-year pre-tax profits of £17.1 million (£8.1 million loss).

Wembley completed the restructuring of its balance sheet and renegotiated banking facilities at the end of last year, enabling payment of a 2p final dividend.

Claes Hultman, chairman, said the company is working with football, rugby league and athletics authorities to complete financial and planning arrangements to redevelop the Wembley site as the new national stadium.

The redevelopment is expected to cost around £200 million, with £120 million from a lottery grant. Wembley suggested previously it would place the stadium into a trust and operate the facilities, although the company said yesterday that no final decision on the stadium's ownership had been taken. Profits from the Wembley complex rose 54 per cent to £14.1 million. US racetrack profits rose 35 per cent to £13.9 million because of the success of video lottery terminals at Rhode Island. Wembley has attracted the Denver Foxes American football team to its Mile High greyhound stadium, ensuring better use of facilities.

But profits from UK greyhound racing fell to £2.5 million affected by the National Lottery. Keith Prowse hospitality profits rose to £500,000. Wembley continued to cut debt and gearing fell to 27 per cent (42 per cent).

Liberty plans to expand portfolio

By MARIANNE CURPHEY, INSURANCE CORRESPONDENT

LIBERTY International, the South African-controlled investment and shopping centre group, increased profits 7 per cent to £100 million in 1996 and said it would consider making acquisitions "if we find the right opportunity".

However, David Fischel, managing director, said he felt "under no pressure to go out and spend money" to increase the financial services division, even though the parent company had £390 million cash.

He said it had been a "transitional year" for the group known formerly as

TransAtlantic Holdings. Donald Gordon, the chairman, said the shopping centres were benefiting from "a number of favourable social trends".

Earnings per share, before exceptional items, increased 13 per cent to 19.77p (17.56p) on reduced capital after the repurchase and cancellation of 40 million shares in 1995 at 320p each. The dividend has been increased 10 per cent to 16p and total shareholders' funds are £2.1 billion. The net asset value increased 16 per cent to 436p (375p) or 445p (395p) on a fully diluted basis.

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Glenmorangie buys distillery from Allied

ALLIED DOMCO, the drinks company, yesterday sold its Ardbeg whisky distillery to Glenmorangie for £7 million (Alasdair Murray writes).

Allied is selling the Ardbeg brand and maturing whisky stocks along with the Islay distillery. The company said it had made the disposal to concentrate its resources on its core brands, which include Ballantine's and Teacher's, as well as Laphroaig, its main Islay malt.

Glenmorangie said that the purchase would strengthen its portfolio of malts, which include Glenmorangie and Glen Moray. The company is aiming to regenerate the brand through an intensified marketing campaign.

Charlton tactic is to sell players

By JASON NISSE

RICHARD MURRAY, chairman of Charlton Athletic, said that the first division football club will sell players to sustain profits after floating on the Alternative Investment Market with a market value of £17.4 million.

The club, of which Michael Grade is a non-executive director, is to raise £6.5 million to complete the rebuilding of its home at The Valley, and will make profits this year only because of the £2.8 million sale of Lee Bowyer to Leeds United.

Mr Murray said that the best Charlton can hope for is to be a "yo-yo" club, winning promotion to the Premiership

only two or three times a season or two afterwards. "All these clubs who say they are going to win the Premiership are chasing a dream," he said.

The chairman said the club had made £1 million a year on average from selling players developed through its youth policy and would continue to sell players to make profit.

Charlton is the 14th football club to come to market. The 15th will be Newcastle, which is to launch a prospectus for its float today. Aston Villa, West Ham and Coventry have indicated that they are likely to float in the next few months.

Tempus, page 26

Whitbread shakes up leisure side

DAVID THOMAS, chief executive designate at Whitbread, launched his first big shake-up at the company yesterday — restructuring the leisure division into five units (Alasdair Murray writes).

The restaurant division, which will include Pelican, BrightReasons, Pizza Hut, TGI Friday's and Costa Coffee, will be headed by Richard Sampson. Alan Parker will be managing director of the Whitbread Hotel company, which includes the Marriott and Travel Inn brands. The Beefeater Restaurant & Pub chain will be run by Simon Wood, while Jerry Walton will be managing director of Thresher, the off licence. Steve Philpott will continue as managing director of the David Lloyd Leisure chain.



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مركزاً من الرأى

STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Investors shrug off US interest rate worries

IT WAS business as usual for investors on the London stock market as they shrugged off worries about a possible rise in US interest rates.

They were no doubt encouraged by the performance of the Dow Jones industrial average overnight, which halved an earlier 120-point fall. Prices in London closed at their best of the day with the FT-SE 100 index up 9.9 points at 4,339.2. A total of 800 million shares were traded.

A program trade was recorded late in the session, with several large lines of stock going through the market. It included 1.2 million Smith-Kline Beecham at 919p as the price rose 9p to 923p and 4.75 million Prudential Corporation at 566p as the price closed 4p dearer at 572p.

The big rise in the dividend on the back of a near doubling of profits lifted Lasso 7p to 240p. But Société Générale Strauss Turnbull told clients to take profits and Credit Lyonnais Laing urged a switch into Enterprise Oil, 10p better at 629p.

There was further heavy turnover in Pilkington as the price rose 3p to 142p and 3.6 million shares changed hands. A line of 500,000 shares went through at 142p leading to suggestions that a large buyer may be stalking Britain's biggest glass producer. Bid speculation also helped Reed International to a rise of 22p to £11.50 as turnover reached 1.46 million shares in this market.

It was a day of mixed fortunes for the banking sector, with Bank of Scotland falling 14p to 341p after warning that profits from BankWest, its 51 per cent owned Australian subsidiary, would fall short of forecast. NatWest Bank was also a weak market, losing 15p at 759p ahead of going ex the 19.4p net dividend on Monday.

A solid performance from the life and pensions operations of Abbey National helped it to post a solid performance last year. The group reassured brokers that it would not pay over the odds for Scottish Amicable. The shares rose 4p to 768p.

Standard Chartered continued to reflect on Wednesday's profit numbers with a jump of 32p to 815p. NatWest Securities, the broker, is telling clients to add to their holdings, while Nikko says the shares a long-term buy.



Ray Nethercott saw Allied Carpets share price slip

British Land, the property developer, eased 2p to 539p as it placed a total of 42.5 million shares at 520p. The proceeds will be used to fund a joint £960 million joint property venture with Great Universal Stores. British Land is paying GUS, 4p dearer at 666p, £200 million for its stake in the venture.

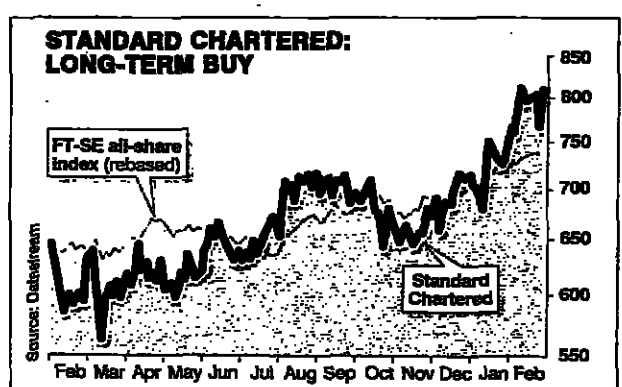
Racal Electronic rose 4p to 292p as it placed a break-up value on Racal of 386p a share.

David S Smith, a takeover favourite, was left nursing a fall of 10p at 242p after Merrill Lynch, the broker, urged clients to reduce their holdings. It has also cut its forecast in the paper group for the current year by £15 million to £85 million and for 1998 by £20 million to £115 million. Hopes

now put a break-up value on Racal of 386p a share.

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STANDARD CHARTERED: LONG-TERM BUY

Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

Source: Standard Chartered

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Standard Chartered

Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

Source: Standard Chartered

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Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

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Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb

Source: Standard Chartered

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

Standard Chartered

Memory Corporation, where losses last year grew from £1.95 million to £4.5 million. The price fell 7p to 45p.

Pace Micro Technology slipped another 1p to 80p, stretching the loss of the past two days to 72p. It follows the group's second profits warning in less than a month and the departure of the chief executive.

It was the first day of trading for a clutch of new companies. Nord Anglia Education Group was placed at 140p and opened at 157p. The price touched a peak of 160p before closing at 164p, a premium of 24p. Howden Holdings made its debut opening 1p higher following a placing at 28p. The price closed at 30p, a premium of 2p.

Hanover International, the hotelier, was steady at 159p. Whispers in the Square Mile suggest the group is poised to make a sizeable acquisition.

Wedderburn Securities, the property developer that is listed on the AIM, was suspended at 24p. It has agreed to acquire an oil trading company. Trading in the shares has been frozen until the deal can be finalised.

CLILF EDGED: There was a sharp flattening of the yield curve as shorter-dated issues remained overshadowed by comments from Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve, about US interest rates.

Prices made a cautious start and were in danger of accelerating the losses after publication of worse than expected US durable goods numbers. But, perversely, investors saw this as an opportunity to buy the market. The best gains were seen among longer-dated issues where rises of about 1/2p were commonplace.

In the futures pit, the March series of the Long Gilt put on 1/2p to close at £113.32. The total number of contracts completed grew to 120,000 as investors continued to roll over open positions in March to the June series. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 put on 1/2p to £106.4, while among the shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 could muster only a rise of three ticks to £104.1.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were little changed in late morning trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 11.54 points at 6,971.64.

Closing Prices Page 29

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 6971.64 (-11.54)
S&P Composite 853.28 (-2.43)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average 10021.56 (+30.64)

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng 13546.60 (+4.77)

Amsterdam:

EDE Index 747.15 (+3.38)

Sydney:

AO 2464.7 (-18.4)

Frankfurt:

DAX 2276.72 (+38.85)

Singapore:

Strait 2190.63 (-25.44)

Brussels:

General 11918.47 (+13.49)

Paris:

CAC-40 2629.40 (+27.23)

Zurich:

SWX Gen 939.10 (-1.60)

London:

FT 30 2870.6 (+6.9)
FT 100 4392.2 (+6.9)
FTSE Mid 250 4603.0 (+2.3)
FTSE 250 2146.8 (+4.1)
FTSE Eurostoxx 100 2149.57 (+2.43)
FT All-Share 2119.74 (+3.93)
FT Non Financials 2167.21 (+4.24)
FT Financials 2147.47 (+3.12)
FT Govt Sec 96.34 (+0.32)
Bargains 464.82
30d Volturne 1.6275
US 1.6275 (+0.0038)
German Mark 2.7300 (+0.0087)
Exchange Index 963.10 (+0.44)
Bank of England official base rate 5.25
EBCU 1.4068
LSDR 1.1793
RFX 154.4 Jan (2.8%) Jan 1997-100
RFX 153.9 Jan (3.1%) Jan 1997-100

RECENT ISSUES

Anglo-Wealth 108p
Aoroch 133p
C&S Publishing 175p
Childcare Group 1p
Childcare Warrens 1p
Centrica (75p)
Energy Group (52p)
First Russian Wrist 510p
Howie 30p
Infobank Intl 144p
J Lewis Hungerford 4p
Nord Anglia Educn 140p
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Pretel Warrants 41p
TR Euro Growth Wns 59p
Tea Plantations Inv 102p
Technoplast 108p
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Zicor Mining 30p

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Land of hope

GUS is well shot of its property portfolio but it is less clear why British Land is so keen. The property company is buying a thousand separate assets, ranging from minor shopping centres to end of high street units. Meanwhile, the Glasgow shopping centre faces competition from a new development. It is a pick and mix portfolio left with GUS when the group exited from some of its less than exciting chain stores.

Retail is the big play in property at the moment but to say that retail is hot is as meaningless as bullish forecasts of the housing market: it all depends on what and where. Good shopping centres trade on yields of 6 per cent or less but take a provincial high street where the consumer footfall has departed for the nearest out-of-town mall and the yields could move into double digits. Planning guidelines that

restrict out-of-town development are good news to owners of such assets who can enjoy the premium attached to scarcity.

Of course, British Land is aware of all this. The company hopes that a shortage of sites in big malls will cause retailers to move back to town streets and a planning bias to town centres will, hopefully, attract investment in infrastructure. A good portion of possibly 20 per cent of the properties will be sold.

British Land is currently weak in non-food retail but the frothy mall market has deterred the company from buying out-of-town centres. That is wise but the high street is a gamble in a retail market that is still patchy. British Land made a success of food retailing while doubters spurned such investments. The company could well repeat the trick but it will have its work cut out.

Partco

WHEN Partco floated in 1994, it set out to double in size within two or three years, an ambition that in hindsight looks modest. Yesterday's acquisition of Brown Brothers, the car components group, means the company has more than trebled in size since it came to the market.

Strategically, the latest move can scarcely be faulted. Brown's activities fit well with Partco's existing range of car parts and garage equipment. There is inevitably some overlap between the two branch networks but Partco is confident this is not a problem. Partco will have a 13 per cent share of the still highly fragmented market in motor components

FEMPUS
id of hope

THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

THE
TIMES
CITY
DIARYThree line up
in Birch stakes

WITH 12 months still to go before Abbey National announces a replacement for Peter Birch's job, the betting is hotting up.

Among the strongest candidates is Ian Harley, 46, finance director, and 25 years an Abbey man. Andrew Pele, 38, managing director of retail banking, is also fancied, but word has it that he may have to wait until next time round. Tim Ingram, 49, managing director of the bank's European arm, is also proving a stayer. Meanwhile, Chris Wernham is the internal candidate tipped to succeed Jane Agar as chief press officer when the latter moves to Merrill Lynch.

THERE are those among us who think Peps are an aid to indigestion. Seven per cent of people surveyed by Direct Line in conjunction with MORI mistook a Pep for an antacid tablet. Six per cent said it was a type of sports drink, 2 per cent said it was a tropical fish, and 18 per cent came clean, admitting that they didn't have a darn clue.

Goodbye Trevor

THE brain behind the Wonderbra advert has defected to a rival agency. Trevor "Hello Boys" Beattie has quit the TBWA Simons Palmer Agency after four years, yesterday switching to GGT. The advertising whizz-kid, who also created The Professionals Nissan Almera commercial, quit over TBWA's reported £12 million merger with Simons. Born and raised in Balsall Heath, Birmingham, Beattie earned a reported £250,000 a year at TBWA. Jay Pond-Jones, GGT's creative director, says: "I see him as a sort of creative coach to my more managerial role."



Caprice Bourret: the new Wonderbra girl

Exotic taste

PAUL ROCHELEAU is to succeed Robbie Paul as chief executive of Albright & Wilson. When Dr Paul retires at the end of July, Rocheleau and his family expect to be happily at home somewhere in England. Whether his address will be in Birmingham, where A&W has its HQ, or London, has yet to be decided, however. The peppy Rocheleau, currently president of A&W Americas, lived in five houses in three countries during his first six years "with the international chemicals group". In Birmingham on business for the next few days, Rocheleau is already developing a taste for balti curries. "I'll say it is enjoyable, but only in limited quantities," he tells me.

Ken gets blues

KEN CLARKE will see his brown Hush Puppies turn blue today. On a visit to Xerox Business Services, the Chancellor will be presented with a photograph of himself, digitally remastered using Xerox colour technology, dressed in blue suede shoes. He will be at Rank Xerox's head office in Marlow, Buckinghamshire, for the signing of a contract between Xerox Business Services and Bridge Direct, a Nottingham business in Mr Clarke's Rushcliffe constituency.

MORAG PRESTON

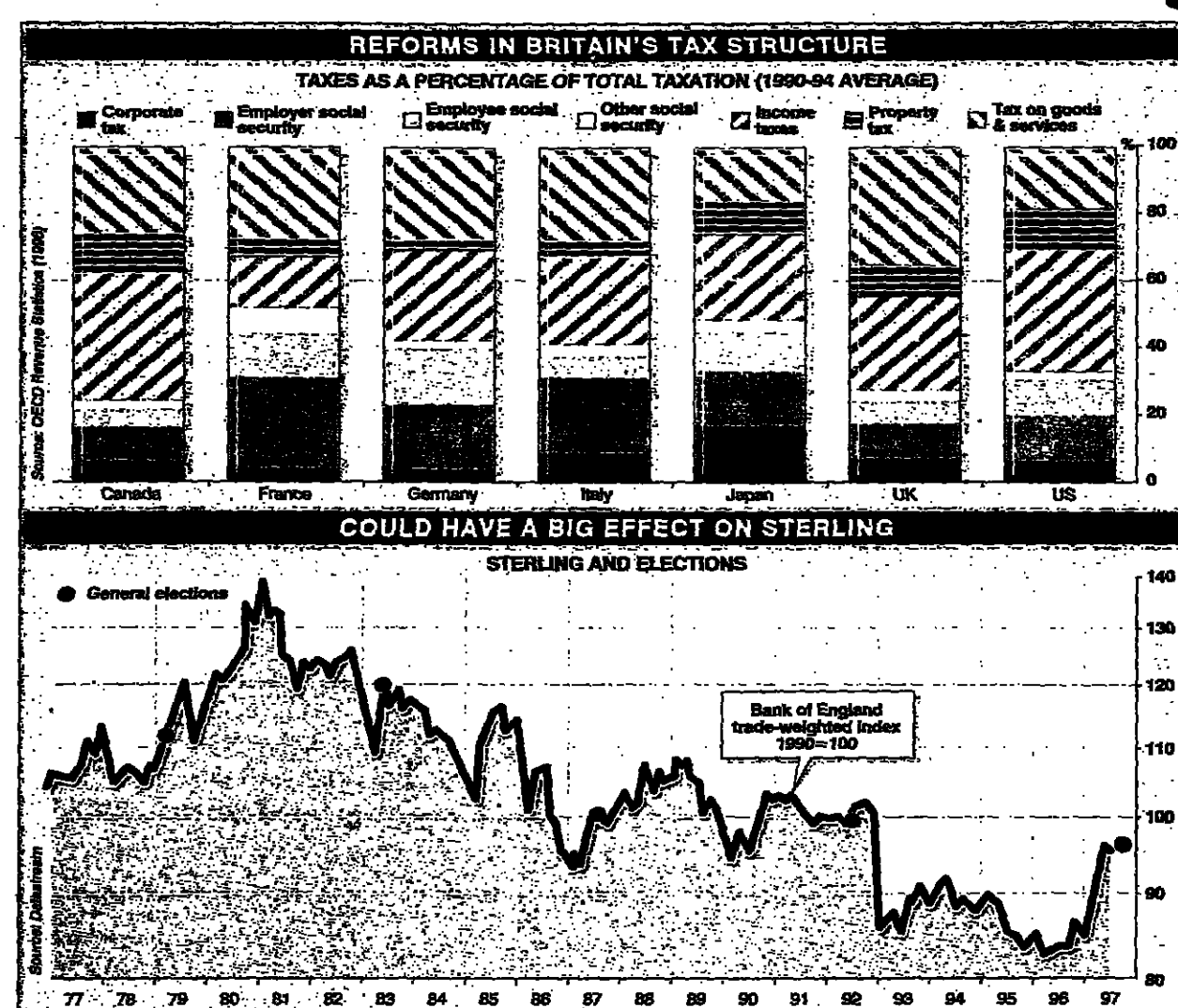
Labour silence
on key points
conceals
likely aims
of monetary
policy

NOW that Gordon Brown has completed his long series of speeches and lectures setting out the official economic policies of a future Labour government, it seems a good time to ask what Labour will really do if it wins the election. In particular it is worth reconsidering what a Labour government could mean for interest rates, sterling, taxes and the state of public finances — since the answers to all these questions seem rather different today from the ones I would have given a few months ago.

A good place to start is Wednesday's concluding lecture in the series, covering Labour's relations with the Bank of England, along with Mr Brown's interview in yesterday's *Times*. The most interesting points on monetary policy are ones that Mr Brown did not make. In proposing to "depersonalise" the monthly Ken and Eddie meetings by appointing a new policymaking council for the Bank, Mr Brown could achieve three unstated objectives.

First, he would avoid future disputes over interest rates with Eddie George, the Bank's Governor, by promising in advance to do whatever Mr George says. This was unnecessary for Kenneth Clarke, the present Chancellor, because he was able to prove that his judgment was often better than the Bank's. But for Mr Brown, who is an unknown quantity and represents a party which businessmen and investors instinctively regard with suspicion, defying the Bank would obviously be a dangerous course. What is less obvious is that Mr Brown's proposed reforms should minimise the political risks to Labour of blindly following the Bank's advice.

For the second unstated objective of his proposals is to put pressure on the Bank and the Governor to behave themselves in a way that is both economically responsible and politically acceptable to a Labour government. By "responsibility" I mean the opposite of the sense that central bankers attach to this word. For central bankers (at least in Europe) the only measure of monetary



"responsibility" is a low rate of inflation. But for anyone else (including central bankers in America and Japan) a responsible monetary policy means something quite different. It is a policy designed not only to achieve reasonably stable prices, but also to minimise unemployment, control cyclical fluctuations and allow the highest sustainable rate of economic growth. This is an infinitely more demanding objective than the simple official goal of keeping inflation at or around the 2.5 per cent target, but this broad range of objectives is exactly what the Tories, under Mr Clarke's economic leadership, have been successfully achieving, and it is what the Bank will be forced to strive for under Mr Brown. How will Mr Brown ensure that the Bank sticks to Anglo-Saxon definitions of monetary responsibility rather than following the example of the Bundesbank?

The answer lies in a cunning political device implicit in Mr Brown's monetary proposals. The Bank as an institution and Mr George as an individual desperately crave "operational independence". And Mr George's own position as Gov-

ernor comes up for review just a year after the general election. Under these circumstances, the Bank's incentive to co-operate with the new Chancellor is clear. I am not suggesting anything cynical or improper. Any reasonable central banker normally wants to co-operate with his finance minister and government, especially one that has just received a clear democratic mandate — and outside the

levels against the mark and fall against the dollar. To exercise such self-restraint, however, the Bank will quite rightly demand a *quid pro quo* from the Chancellor — some help in controlling inflation by non-monetary means. Specifically, Labour will have to go even further than the present Government to restrain demand by reducing public borrowing. That will mean raising taxes, not necessarily by very much in the short-run, but quite substantially over the next few years. In my view an increase in taxes of, say, £5 billion or £7 billion, equivalent to 1 per cent of GDP, would be a price well worth paying for a better-balanced economy, a more competitive pound and a long-run reduction in the burden of national debt.

6 Mr George's position comes up for review a year after the election ?

On the monetary front, the Bank of England will have to co-operate with the Government's desire to maintain a reasonably competitive exchange rate by going easy on interest rates. Interest rates may not rise by even as much as the 0.75 percentage points that the markets now expect by December — if so, the pound would probably rise only slightly from current

economy as a whole. It also has important implications for all other aspects of economic policy. The monetary front, the Bank of England will have to co-operate with the Government's desire to maintain a reasonably competitive exchange rate by going easy on interest rates. Interest rates may not rise by even as much as the 0.75 percentage points that the markets now expect by December — if so, the pound would probably rise only slightly from current

might have a difference there. Leahy, who was born in Liverpool and still has a Scouse accent and a passion for Everton Football Club, is a convinced populist. In spite of his job and high income, he sees himself and his family as typical in many ways. His wife, Alison, is a GP and they live with their 8-year-old twins and 5-year-old son in Ponder's End, near the Tesco headquarters in Cheshunt. As he says: "My wife works — that is very typical nowadays — we have children, we live in the suburbs, we're short of time — that's absolutely typical."

His suspicions focus on the architects who criticise supermarket designs, and particularly the typical brick and tile branches of Tesco found in Essex, adorned with Neoclassical columns and arches. "Those buildings work well in the British climate. That style, ordinary people like. It doesn't win competitions, but it is popular with the people who use them," he says.

People who have worked with Leahy say he is smart and hard working. He also demands, and generally receives, great loyalty. This is an asset — up to a point. As for his faults, one former colleague, who is otherwise an admirer, reckoned that he can be stubborn and "would be perfectly capable of leading the Charge of the Light Brigade". But at this stage, he added, heroic failure seems very unlikely.

Tesco chief with populist touch puts customers first

Terry Leahy talks about his new role to Sarah Cunningham



The success of Clubcard is largely down to Terry Leahy

than anyone else," he says. The transformation of Tesco from a "pile 'em high, sell 'em cheap" outfit into the current slick, service-oriented operation began long before Leahy's time. But the change accelerated when Tesco began its move into financial services two years ago with the launch of Clubcard, Britain's first supermarket loyalty card.

Leahy is credited with much of the success of Clubcard and among his first tasks as chief executive he will have to steer Tesco through the launch of the bank that it is setting up with Royal Bank of Scotland. The bank's first credit card will come out in the summer. Mortgages, investment, insurance and savings products are expected to follow. The announcement of the

banking venture this month was marred by a reported row with NatWest, which had been running Tesco's souped-up Clubcard Plus. In spite of the grumblings from the NatWest camp, Leahy is adamant that Tesco will not have to pay any penalty or compensation for ending their agreement prematurely.

Leahy insists that the new bank will be entirely driven by customer demands. "If we are going to be successful in this area it won't be because the banks are very bad, it is only because we are going to be very good. If we can develop products and services which genuinely are convenient to use and are simple to understand and do offer outstanding value then we

might have a difference there."

BUSINESS
LETTERS'Glass in drink'
case not over

From Mr J. A. Gorman
Sir, I must take issue with your report that British Airways won a decisive courtroom victory against me in my "Glass in the drink" action (February 13). This action is far from decided. His Honour Judge Nicholas Medawar, QC, struck out the action last November. Despite my counsel presenting copious medical evidence, signed by four doctors, the same judge effectively refused even to allow me to be heard under oath. Judge Medawar's display of ridicule and judicial hostility towards my counsel was astounding. My solicitors were immediately instructed to lodge notice of appeal, alleging judicial bias leading to this perverse judgment.

Finally, to clarify so-called "doubts over medical evidence", all of the various medical reports of the serious injuries sustained after the "Glass in the drink" incident is available for inspection, and confirm without doubt that such injury did occur as alleged. Yours faithfully, JOHN GORMAN, Parque Residencia, Club Atlantis, Bungalow 210, San Eugenio, 38660, Playa de las Americas, Adeje, Tenerife, Canary Isles.

Rail chaos should
be a warning sign

From Mrs Brenda Benson
Sir, With the chaos at South West Trains, one of the first private rail companies, we are seeing just what a failure rail privatisation is for the travelling public.

Thousands of commuters are being left waiting on station platforms because the company chose to put its shareholders first and let 10 per cent of its train drivers go before the alternative arrangements for keeping the trains running were in place. And all this just weeks before the general election at a time when transport ministers are desperately trying to talk up rail privatisation. It makes you fear for the future of the railways if the Tories win again.

This Government destroyed the coal industry just months after the last election. How long would it take another Tory government and the new private rail companies to decide that the sums don't add up after all — and do the same to Britain's railways? Yours faithfully, BRENDA BENSON, 14 Percival Road, Feltham, Middlesex.

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هكذا من الاصل

Lex prevails in a tough market to lift profits

BY FRASER NELSON

SHARES of Lex Service, Britain's largest motor dealer, continued their recovery yesterday after the company said that it had overcome tough market conditions to achieve a 22 per cent increase in underlying pre-tax profits last year.

The shares rose 13p, to 344.5p, after it said that its vehicle leasing and Hyundai importing divisions were off-setting slow growth from its new-car dealerships.

Sir Trevor Chinn, chairman, said that the largest vehicle manufacturers were losing their grip of the new car market as customers looked for more variety. "What is happening is that Ford and

Vauxhall and Rover are losing market share," he said. "The market is more fluid because people want to be more individual, and companies are giving their employees a lot more choice [of company car]. The problem for Ford is that the Mondeo is a bog-standard car."

Lex's Hyundai importing operation broke into profit last year, making £5.4 million against a loss of £900,000 last time. The number of Hyundais registered rose by 36 per cent over the year, to 19,000.

Overall, pre-tax profits rose to £31.4 million before exceptional losses of £42.2 million, on sales that were static at £1.56 billion. After a slightly lower tax rate of 27 per cent (28 per cent), earnings strengthened to 31.5p a share (20.4p).

A final dividend of 9.0p per share brings the total for the year to 16p (15p).

Lex's lift trucks division continued to be afflicted by the downturn in the sector. Its profits declined slightly to £12.5 million (£12.8 million). The company attributed this to the increased durability of trucks, and said that it plans to mount a recovery by strengthening its sales efforts.

The company also said that its dealerships, which lifted profits by 8.3 per cent to £14.3 million over the year, were still delivering inadequate returns. The higher profits were drawn from 62 dealerships, against the 86 that were operating at the start of the year. It has also reduced the capital employed in its retail operations, from £155 million to £119 million.

Lex said that it is still in the early stages of reorganising the remaining dealerships, and is in talks with Ford and Rover about how to continue. Its smaller and less profitable dealerships will be sold off while a few of the larger dealerships — more favoured by the car manufacturers — will change marque.



Sir Trevor Chinn, chairman of Lex, which prospered despite fluid market conditions

Scholl in move to unify its brand

BY ERIC REGULY

SCHOLL, the footwear company, yesterday confirmed that it has taken the first step in gaining control of the brand outside of Europe with the purchase of Scholl Latin America for an initial payment of \$12.5 million.

The acquisition, reported in *The Times* earlier this month, is expected to be followed by negotiations to purchase Scholl's operations in North America from Schering-Plough, the American pharmaceuticals group.

The three Scholl companies in the Americas and in Europe have been separate entities since 1988, when Schering-Plough hived off its international operations.

Stuart Wallis, chairman of Scholl said: "The acquisition of Scholl Latin America is seen as an important step in exercising greater control of the Scholl brand worldwide and provides access to markets in Mexico and Latin America with substantial growth potential."

Scholl Latin America, which was owned by private investors, had net assets last year of \$3 million and operating profits of \$1.35 million. Scholl has agreed to pay an additional \$2.25 million in each of the next two years, raising the potential price to \$23 million, depending on the achievement of sales and profit targets.

Scholl would not comment on its talks with Schering-Plough, but would like to own Scholl North America outright or set up a Schering-Scholl joint venture that would own the operations in the two continents.

Compensation to chief slows BSM

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

BSM, the driving school group, has pushed its full-year profits below last year's level with a payment of £350,000 to Paul Massey, its chief executive, for loss of office.

Richard Glover, the managing director, is taking over immediately as chief executive from Mr Massey, the company revealed yesterday.

No new managing director has been appointed. The company said Mr Massey, who has been with BSM for 12 years, was leaving "to pursue other interests". He will be a consultant to the group.

The compensation payment means that pre-tax profits declined 2 per cent. The figure for the 12 months to December 27 was £5.27 million

compared with £5.38 million. Mr Glover said trading in the first few weeks of this year had been poor, largely because of bad weather. This time last year business was booming before the introduction of the written theory test.

As one way of tackling the flat market BSM is planning to introduce computerised driving simulators later this

year. It is investing £500,000 in converting French technology and buying ten simulators for a trial in September. If successful, the simulators will be installed around the country. Mr Glover said any resulting increase in revenue will not be seen until 1998.

The final dividend is 5.06p (4.6p), payable on May 12. It makes 7.59 (6.9p) for the year.

Changes in boardroom for Boots

BOOTS, the retailer, announced boardroom changes yesterday (Sarah Cunningham writes). Sir Michael Angus, chairman, has agreed to stay on for one more year to July 1998. He will then become deputy chairman and Lord Blyth, deputy chairman and chief executive, will become executive chairman. Additionally, two executive directors are to become joint group managing directors with immediate effect. They are Steve Russell, managing director of Boots the Chemists, and David Thompson, finance director. Mr Russell will add international retail development to his portfolio, while Mr Thompson will add Do It All and Boots Healthcare International to his. Brian Whalan, managing director of Halfords, is to retire in July for personal reasons.

Vaux sells nursing homes subsidiary

VAUX GROUP, the brewing and hotels group, is selling St Andrews Homes, its nursing homes subsidiary, for a maximum consideration of £43.2 million. The buyer is Highland Group, a care home group based in Edinburgh. St Andrews operates 38 care homes in the Midlands, North of England and Scotland. The net book value of the assets being sold was £40.4 million at the end of September 30. In the last financial year the business earned pre-tax profits of £3.7 million.

The consideration comprises £35 million in cash payable on completion, £5.2 million of loan notes and a payout of up to £3 million payable three years after completion of the sale. Sir Paul Nicholson, chairman of Vaux, said: "This is an excellent result for our shareholders. We have achieved full value for St Andrews, which will release resources for investment in our core businesses of brewing and pubs and hotels."

Amec takes slice of Spie

SHARES in Amec rose by 11p, to 121½p, yesterday after the UK construction and civil engineering company said that it had completed the acquisition of Spie Batignolles, in partnership with the French contractor's employees, from Schneider for Fr350 million. Amec will hold a 41.6 per cent interest in the business. Following the transaction, a further Fr12.5 million is being invested in Spie through capital increases. The offer to Spie employees resulted in about 12,000 of them contributing Fr270 million for a 58.4 per cent holding.

Hoya boost for Wales

HOYA, the Japanese spectacle lens manufacturer, announced a £10 million expansion at its Wrexham plant in north Wales. The company is building a factory that will double the workforce from 100 to 200. Construction is under way, as is recruitment of the 100 new staff. The factory will enable the company to expand its output of scratch-resistant plastic lenses, which are supplied to opticians across the UK. Hoya has operated in north Wales since 1980 and has seen its turnover increase from £9 million to £12 million last year. Further growth is expected this year.

Knitwear pay pact

MINIMUM pay rates for thousands of hosiery and knitwear workers will increase by 11p an hour to £3.20 under a deal agreed yesterday. Wages will rise by 2.5 per cent from April and workers will receive two days' paid paternity leave for the first time. The 25,000 workers in England and Wales covered by the agreement will also receive an extra day's paid compassionate leave. The deal between the Knitting Industries Federation and the National Union of Knitwear, Footwear and Apparel Trades, will affect mainly women.

Quarto earnings ahead

QUARTO GROUP, the book publisher, achieved an 11 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £7.81 million in 1996, with acquisitions helping to offset the adverse impact of a strong pound towards the end of the year. Earnings rose 7 per cent to 26.5p a share. A final dividend of 5.8p a share lifts the total 10 per cent, to 8p. The shares rose 11p to 238½p yesterday. Laurence Orbach, chairman and chief executive, said major markets continue to be strong, with some evidence the British market is beginning to improve after a lengthy recession.

Slide for Samsung

A SLUMP in computer chip prices sent net profits of South Korea's Samsung Electronics, a significant investor in the UK, down 93 per cent to 164.16 billion won (£117 million) in 1996, but analysts expect a recovery this year by the world's largest memory chip maker. The company said that a freefall in prices of 16-megabit dynamic random access memory (DRAM) chips hampered profits. DRAM sales are about 35 per cent of sales. Prices of 16-megabit DRAM chips fell about 80 per cent in 1996 because of global oversupply.

Renishaw lifts payout

SHARES of Renishaw rose 21p to 359p yesterday after the specialist engineering company reported a rise in pre-tax profits to £10.8 million from £8.2 million in the six months to December 31. Earnings were 10.84p a share, compared with 8.89p, and the interim dividend is lifted to 2.89p a share from 2.41p. The company, which generates almost 90 per cent of sales overseas, said the record profits were achieved in spite of the recent strength of sterling. Sales rose 11 per cent to £39.7 million.

FII passes interim

FII GROUP, the manufacturer and supplier of footwear to Marks & Spencer, is passing the interim dividend despite reducing losses to £327,000 before tax from £3.6 million in the half-year to the end of November. Losses were 1.9p a share, down from 15.6p previously. Last year the company paid an interim dividend of 6p but did not pay a final dividend. Shares of FII were unchanged at 100p yesterday. In September the company raised £7.3 million from a rights issue of new shares at 105p each.

Green Property up

GREEN PROPERTY, the property development company based in the Irish Republic, reported a 34 per cent increase in annual pre-tax profits to Ir£8.5 million in 1996. Green's Irish portfolio benefited from the general rise in property prices in the Republic. In the UK a string of acquisitions made during 1994, valued at more than Ir£120 million, performed well. Earnings rose almost 14 per cent to Ir£13.73p a share. Net assets rose to Ir£274p a share from Ir£194p. A final dividend of Ir£3.3p lifts the total almost 9 per cent to Ir£4.6p.

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CHANGING TIMES

Signet does new deal with banks

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SIGNET, the former Ratners jewellery retailing company, took a step towards resolving its complex financial problems yesterday with the announcement of new long-term financing arrangements.

The group has set up a three-year \$360 million credit facility with a new syndicate of banks. The new syndicate is led by BZW, Midland Bank, Banque Paribas and the Royal Bank of Scotland.

This means that the banks which were involved in the group's existing \$450 million two-year facility agreement, which was due to expire at the end of June, will be repaid in full.

The company said that talks aimed at a reconstruction of its share capital structure were continuing. It will have to persuade holders of preference shares to agree to convert all their shares into new ordinary shares. A company spokesman said that it was impossible to say how long the talks would go on. He said: "Obviously the board would like to get it sorted out as quickly as possible."

Fisher hit by cockle devastation

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

ALBERT FISHER, the food processing and distribution group, said that its most recent harvest of cockles had been severely restricted by the devastation of the cockle beds in 1996.

The cockle beds were damaged after the water froze off the north coast of Holland early last year. It will not be clear until April. Cockles usually account for around 10 per cent of Albert Fisher's annual profits.

In a trading statement for the half year to February 28 released yesterday, the company said that the poor cockle harvest had been partially offset by a much improved fresh mussel market. It said the remainder of the seafood division has made good progress.

The European food processing division is performing in line with budget. In the European fresh produce division, which earns the greater part of its profits in the second half of the financial year, the vegetable markets remain difficult, however. It said some markets have shown improvement since the new year. The shares were unchanged at 43½p.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

0171-782 7344

LEGAL NOTICES

SWIFT LEVICK SUPERMAGNET LIMITED
(In members' voluntary liquidation)
Company number: 1476614
NOTICE TO THE CREDITORS OF SWIFT LEVICK SUPERMAGNET LIMITED
On 10 February 1997 the Company was placed in members' voluntary liquidation and Roger Marsh and Ian Clifford Powell of PricewaterhouseCoopers, 9 Bank Court, Leeds, LS1 2BN were appointed liquidators by the shareholders. The liquidators give notice, pursuant to Rule 4.122A of the Insolvency Rules 1986, that the creditors of the Company must send details, in writing, of any claims against the Company to the liquidators, at the above address by 31 March 1997, which is the last day for proving claims. The liquidators also give notice that they will consider any claim by a creditor who does not make a claim by the date mentioned will not be included in the distribution. The Company is able to pay all its known creditors in full. 10 February 1997
ROGER MARSH
IAN CLIFFORD POWELL
Joint Liquidators

SWIFT LEVICK ENGINEERING LIMITED
(In members' voluntary liquidation)
Company number: 2047932
NOTICE TO THE CREDITORS OF SWIFT LEVICK ENGINEERING LIMITED
On 10 February 1997 the company was placed in members' voluntary liquidation and Roger Marsh and Ian Clifford Powell of PricewaterhouseCoopers, 9 Bank Court, Leeds, LS1 2BN were appointed liquidators by the shareholders. The liquidators give notice, pursuant to Rule 4.122A of the Insolvency Rules 1986, that the creditors of the Company must send details, in writing, of any claims against the Company to the liquidators, at the above address by 31 March 1997, which is the last day for proving claims. The liquidators also give notice that they will consider any claim by a creditor who does not make a claim by the date mentioned will not be included in the distribution. The Company is able to pay all its known creditors in full. 10 February 1997
ROGER MARSH
IAN CLIFFORD POWELL
Joint Liquidators

THOMAS CONRAD EUROPE LIMITED
COMPANY NUMBER: 2548222
NOTICE TO THE CREDITORS OF THOMAS CONRAD EUROPE LIMITED
On 15 February 1997 the above named company was placed in members' voluntary liquidation and Anthony Victor Jones of liquidators by the shareholders. The liquidators give notice, pursuant to Rule 4.122A of the Insolvency Rules 1986, that the creditors of the Company must send details, in writing, of any claims against the Company to the liquidators, at 1st London House, London EC2A 4PU, by 2 April 1997 which is the last day for proving claims. The liquidators also give notice that they will consider any claim by a creditor who does not make a claim by the date mentioned will not be included in the distribution. The Company is able to pay all its known creditors in full. 10 February 1997
ANTHONY VICTOR JONES
JOHN LEITCHMAN
Joint Liquidators

THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986
In the matter of
CHITRE PROPERTIES II PLC
IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION
We, Peter John Robertson, Secretary and Peter James Dickinson of Baker Tilly, 2 Wills Street, London EC2A 4PU, give notice to creditors pursuant to section 79 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that we were appointed Joint Liquidators of the above named company on 19 February 1997.
Signed: P J Robertson
P J Dickinson
Joint Liquidators
Date: 22/2/97

THE INSOLVENCY ACT 1986
In the matter of
GREEN PROPERTY PLC
IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION
We, Peter John Robertson, Secretary and Peter James Dickinson of Baker Tilly, 2 Wills Street, London EC2A 4PU, give notice to creditors pursuant to section 79 of the Insolvency Act 1986 that we were appointed Joint Liquidators of the above named company on 19 February 1997.
Signed: P J Robertson
P J Dickinson
Joint Liquidators
Date: 22/2/97

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THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

Shares end at best levels of the day

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Company	Price	Change	%	Dividend	Yield	P/E
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES						
BANKS						
BREWERIES, PUBS & REST						
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS						
ENGINEERING, VEHICLES						
FOOD MANUFACTURERS						
LEISURE & HOTELS						
MINING						
PROPERTY						
TELECOMMUNICATIONS						
TEXTILES & APPAREL						
TRANSPORT						
WATER						
ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET						
RETAILERS, GENERAL						
RETAILERS, FOOD						
OTHER FINANCIAL						
OIL & GAS						
HOUSEHOLD GOODS						
INSURANCE						
MEDIA						
INVESTMENT TRUSTS						
MEDICALS						
SHORTS (under 5 years)						
LONGS (over 15 years)						
INDEXED						
INDEX-Linked on projected inflation at:						
BUILDING & CONSTRUCT						
ELECTRICITY						
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Company	Price	Change	%	Dividend	Yield	P/E
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BANKS						
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WATER						
ALTERNATIVE INV MARKET						
RETAILERS, GENERAL						
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INVESTMENT TRUSTS						
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Company	Price	Change	%	Dividend	Yield	P/E
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Source: FT Information
of Price of Shares (Ex-dividend) & to Rights
based on the closing price of the shares on the
previous day of trading. Changes, yields and
price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

Source: FT Information
of Price of Shares (Ex-dividend) & to Rights
based on the closing price of the shares on the
previous day of trading. Changes, yields and
price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.



THEATRE 1

In Stratford the rarely seen *Cymbeline* is given a smart overhaul by the RSC...



THEATRE 2

...while in London, *Faust* is radically but impenetrably revised for our frazzled times



THE TIMES ARTS



RADIO

The novels of Armistead Maupin are the starting point for a new travel series about America



TOMORROW

Does Tennessee Williams's *Camino Real* justify revival? Read Benedict Nightingale's view

THEATRE: Excellent RSC acting in a fine production at Stratford; plus some philosophical confusion, and an Irish one-hander

Doom, gloom and humanity

ACTORS Touring Company is into doomsday scenarios. For its last production Nick Philippou rediscovered an Odeon von Horvath play from 1926 that comically savaged a Europe in disarray after the First World War. Now Mark Ravenhill provides a text where a character argues that humanity itself is at an end. I wish I had been able to follow the argument.

Faust
Lyric Studio,
Hammersmith

This is not the *Faust* of Marlowe or Goethe or Thomas Mann. It is closer to Klaus Mann's *Mephisto*, where the tempter and the tempted co-exist in one person, but in the Ravenhill version, these roles switch between his two characters. One is a Foucault-like philosopher embarking on a sexual spree in California, the other a callow youth at war with his father. We do not learn the names of the protagonists but are told that the father is a computer billionaire named Bill — not a name one would lightly choose.

Since Ravenhill is the author of *Shopping and Fucking*, the likelihood was high that alarming events would occur. Publicity photos suggested that blood would flow, and so it does, though the injury to the professor's eyes causes no lasting inconvenience.

So what happens? On Pippa Nissen's spare and mobile set, philosopher and youth do a deal. The philosopher wants "to live a little", the youth to escape from Dad.

The lean and hungry look of the French-Canadian actor Alain Pelletier gives a good impression of cerebral rigour, and a certain intellectual fa-

tigue comes across in his gesture of tilting his head sideways and supporting its weight on a hand. Zoomorphic shapes are projected onto video screens, and a man's naked body too, bleeding from self-inflicted slashes.

These wounds come in because the youth — a high-twitch performance by Pete Baillie — has trouble with reality unless it comes by way of video or the Internet. Some guy they meet slices his jugular as a way to approach real reality. Hereabouts the philosopher becomes Mephisto and the youth goes back to his father.

None of these events satisfactorily allows an exploration of what I take to be the play's prime question: humanity, whither? The stated answer is that we must be cruel, but this snacks of triniting the argument to fit a desired sexual solution. On three occasions when the play could oblige us to face something horrible, Philippou never quite shows it. I was grateful for that.

JEREMY KINGSTON



Tempter tempted: Alain Pelletier and Pete Baillie

There is an unease about the Royal Shakespeare Company in the air, and not just because the troupe will soon clamber into buses and take a worryingly long summer break from the Barbican. Some say its modern work is disappointing — yet Peter Whelan's fascinating contribution to the Shakespeare archives, *The Herbal Bed*, is about to move to the West End. I myself have felt that its

Cymbeline
RST, Stratford

classic productions are not what they were — yet here is Adrian Noble's superb revival of *Cymbeline*, with Joanne Pearce, Paul Freeman and Guy Henry firmly answering the suspicion that RSC acting is getting weaker.

Noble has made heavyish cuts to the text, but they left me unbothered. Indeed, I was relieved to find the laborious opening conversation between First Gent and Second Gent reduced to a deft exegesis narrated by an orange-clad soothsayer to a white-clothed cast clustered over a flame. That instantly establishes the right feel. *Cymbeline* is a wonderfully tall tale, absorbing in itself but packed with ingredients from Shakespeare's other late romances: a pure young heroine, evil in high places, desperate separations, glorious reconciliations, a visit from Mount Olympus, forgiveness, joy.

An oriental simplicity rules. Anthony Ward's set is a blue box with silky white flooring that rises to hang like a sail above the stage. Two Little Maids From School teeter about in black slippers. The more elevated members of the royal household are Confucian figures in skullcaps and long black jackets. Even the

A tall tale, beautifully told



Evidence of seduction: Paul Freeman's Iachimo (left) shows off the bracelet to Damian Lewis's Posthumus, watched by David Glover (Philario)

Romans' red robes owe less to Caesar than to the Mikado. The battle between them and the British comes with staves, huge banners and Edward Petherbridge's Cymbeline aloft on a brass-and-cloth throne. People trip in and out via a walkway running through the stalls.

Why so radical a journey from Britain circa AD 10? Is Noble excusing what's exotic in the story of Cymbeline's daughter Imogen, whose adventures include being be-

trayed by her wicked step-mother, menaced by her husband after the Roman Iachimo pretends he has slept with her, disguising himself as a boy and meeting her long-lost brothers in the Welsh wilds, and, after being wrongly deemed dead, waking up to find herself beside a corpse she thinks is her husband but is actually her stepbrother. Cloten? All I can report is delight in an evening that combines clarity with a sense of wonder.

Petherbridge solves one of the play's problems by bringing an interestingly pained, flummoxed quality to the undeveloped, unattractive title-character. There is certainly no doubting who wears the pantaloons in his court, given the power that Joanna McCullum's towering Queen majestically exudes.

Pearce's Imogen should probably react more strongly to such setbacks as finding that a) her husband wants to kill her, and b) she is snug-

gling up to what looks like his headless trunk; but she has the essential qualities in abundance. I have never seen her bring more freshness, sweetness and warmth to a part.

The male villains are equally effective. Freeman cannot motivate Iachimo's final repentance — who could? — but everything about him in the early scenes, from his smile to the silvery glint in his eye, radiates arrogance and sly, stealthy destructiveness. And Henry does much to

humanise a character usually played as a boorish oaf. His Cloten fastidiously lengthens his name's tell-tale first syllable, and, instead of roaring and blustering, gives the impression of a natural Aguecheek trying to convince himself he is a mix of Romeo and Hotspur or a long, thin prawn indulging in shark-fantasies. Funny stuff, fine production.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Plot makes a shallow grave

THE hottest action is all over before the start of Colin O'Connor's monologue. *All Those Trammelling Dreams*. Only after the sounds of a scuffle have died down does the play's sole character appear, blood dribbling from his nose and mouth.

Crash landing somewhere

between Edgar Allan Poe and Christopher Isherwood. O'Connor's play doubles as the breathless, febrile testimony of a champagne Charlie. An unpleasant figure, all too easy to distrust, he has been cornered by a mob after a sordid encounter and now addresses an audience he ima-

All Those Trammelling Dreams
The Crypt, Dublin

gines to be filled with impatient bystanders, witnesses and vigilantes baying for some explanation of the night's events.

The effete, dinner-suited sucker, played by Michael McElhatton in a daze of fragility and bluster, begins to offer an account of himself, of his habit of frequenting nightclubs alone, of drinking too much wine and of tipping too extravagantly, and of his uncomfortable connections with a mysterious (and significantly absent) couple. Gradually, a fuzzy picture begins to emerge of a dysfunctional relationship, the very shadowiness of which is its only explanation.

McElhatton always has a mammoth task in bringing an often jerky script together.

O'Connor's play demands that his actor respond to a pressing crowd of gawkers, something which calls for carefully timing and a clipping pace. On opening night, McElhatton certainly kept the speed high, but his occasionally breathlessly high-adrenaline performance came at the expense of some accuracy.

Even though he has written a play which relies on a hidden secret, O'Connor does not seem to have all the skills required to maintain a convincing subterfuge. His twists are always visible and too often sound hollowly literary.

The central notion of performance as a hybrid of legal testimony and storytelling is not strong or fresh enough to support the weight of even this short evening and the narrative soon shifts into fantasy territory which, while perhaps offering a useful exercise for an author, has limited rewards for his audience.

LUKE CLANCY

Half bored

Travel programmes on radio can never hope to compete with their television equivalents any more than travel brochures would have much of a readership if they lacked pictures. The main example on BBC Radio is *Breakaway* (Radio 4), which is said to be one of the targets in the rifle sights of James Boyle, Radio 4's Controller.

I cannot understand why *Breakaway* persists in trying to visit places. It would be far better to let Jill Dando do the wandering in the sun routine on TV and turn *Breakaway* into a show for travel consumers, leading us through the maze of special offers that aren't.

Breakaway does some of that, but not enough. But there is another thing that makes the present *Breakaway* unsatisfactory, and that is radio's excellence at doing travel shows that are not ostensibly travel shows at all.

A fine example began on Radio 4 this week. Novel America (Tuesday at 10am, FM only) is a four-part

RADIO

which visits different parts of America through the medium of novels set in those areas. The idea is not new, but I doubt that it has ever been better executed than in this series.

The presenter is Martin Wainwright, and in the first programme he saw San Francisco through his own eyes and those of the writer Armistead Maupin, creator of the *Tales of the City* stories, which are set in San Francisco.

There were no recommended hotels or ideal vantage points from which to admire the Golden Gate Bridge. Instead there were real people living in real streets doing real jobs offering real experiences of real life. Mainstream travel programmes leave the feeling that the show has been to a place to save us the trouble: this one must have had people reaching for the nearest travel agent.

PETER BARNARD

A TIMES NEWSPAPERS COMPETITION

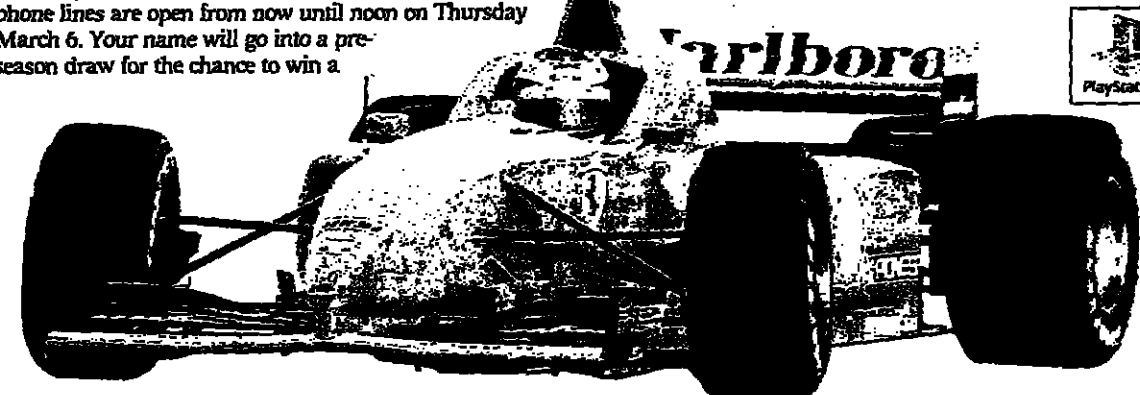
Play Fantasy Formula One

Prizes worth £40,000

Now is your chance to get in pole position for *The Times* and the Marlboro World Championship Team 1997 Formula One season which starts in Melbourne on Sunday March 9. For the chance to win a share of our £40,000 Fantasy Formula One jackpot just choose a team of six racing drivers and six constructors from the four groups listed in the panel, below. Entry phone lines are open from now until noon on Thursday March 6. Your name will go into a pre-season draw for the chance to win a

prize of £1,000 or a Sony PlayStation. You can switch your fantasy team after each grand prix. Full details of the scoring system and the terms and conditions appeared in the 20-page Grand Prix supplement, free with Monday's *Times*.

● You can also play Fantasy Formula One with *The Sunday Times* for the chance to win additional prizes.



THE PRIZES

JACKPOT: The manager with the best team score on our Fantasy Formula One leaderboard after the final race of the season, the European Grand Prix at Estoril, Portugal, on October 26, will win £25,000. Prizes of £10,000 and £5,000 will go to two runners-up.

INDIVIDUAL RACE WINNERS: The manager of the team which scores the most points in the Australian Grand Prix will win a luxury three-day trip for two to San Marino. The runner-up will get a Sony PlayStation and Formula One game worth £250.

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TO ENTER BY TELEPHONE
Call our entry hotline on 0891 405 001 (+44 990 100 311) outside the UK. Calls last approximately seven minutes and must be made using a Touch-Tone telephone.

Follow the instructions on the entry line. You will be asked to nominate your 12 two-digit selections in turn. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply. You will then be asked to give your Fantasy Formula One team name, your own name, address, postcode and daytime telephone number. You will receive a 10-digit PIN number as confirmation of your entry. Please keep a record of this with your team details.

MAKE 3 SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THESE FOUR GROUPS

01 Damon Hill	07 Mika Hakkinen
02 Michael Schumacher	08 David Coulthard
03 Jacques Villeneuve	09 Rubens Barrichello
04 Eddie Irvine	10 Heinz-Harald Frentzen
05 Jean Alesi	11 Johnny Herbert
06 Gerhard Berger	12 Mika Salo
13 Olivier Panis	19 Giancarlo Fisichella
14 Jos Verstappen	20 Shinji Nakano
15 Ukyo Katayama	21 Nicola Larini
16 Pedro Diniz	22 Jarno Trulli
17 Ricardo Rosset	23 Jan Magnussen
18 Ralf Schumacher	24 Vincenzo Sospiri
25 Williams	31 Arrows
26 Ferrari	32 Sauber
27 McLaren	33 Tyrrell
28 Benetton	34 Minardi
29 Jordan	35 Stewart
30 Ligier	36 Lola

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CHANGING TIMES

NOMINATED FOR
BAFTA AWARDS

MADONNA ANTONIO BANDERAS JONATHAN PRYCE

EVITA

AT CINEMAS NATIONWIDE NOW

مكتبة من رايان

CHOICE 1

The Leap into Dance festival features new work by Richard Alston

VENUE: Tomorrow, The Green, Richmond

CHOICE 2

Maxim Vengerov displays his virtuoso violin technique

VENUE: Recital tonight at the Barbican

THE TIMES ARTS

CHOICE 3

Curtain up on Widows, a new play by Ariel Dorfman and Tony Kushner

VENUE: Previewing at the Traverse, Edinburgh

CHOICE 4

Josephine Barstow sings Elizabeth I in Britten's opera Gloriana

VENUE: Theatre Royal, Nottingham, tomorrow

LONDON

AUGUST SANDER: An exhibition of approximately 200 photographs capturing rural and urban society in Germany both before and after the First World War opens today in the Wotton Gallery, and runs until June 8. National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, WC2 (0171-306 0055) Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm, Sun, noon-6pm

LEAP INTO DANCE: Richmond's sixth annual dance festival features the London premiere of Richard Alston's new work by the Richard Alston Dance Company. A powerful triple-bill by the company's new trio includes *Beyond Measure* and *Lachrymae*. Richmond, The Green (0181-640 0088) Tomorrow, 7-9pm

MAXIM VENGEROV: The virtuoso violinist returns to the Barbican after a three-year absence. This evening's recital begins with Mozart's *Sonata in B-flat*, Schumann's *Adagio*, and ends with the Russian *Sonata*. A selection of music by Tchaikovsky completes the programme. With violinist, piano, baritone, and cello. Barbican, St Martin's Place, WC2 (0171-306 8891) Tonight, 7.30pm

ELSEWHERE

BURNINGHAM: Nield Siddiqui and Company presents the British premiere of a new work which uses classical Kathak dance to explore the effects of water, light and colour on

WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Maczey

moor, movement and feeling: *Prism* receives its London premiere in the Puck Room on March 18. MAM, Cannon Hill Park, Edgmoor Road (0121-440 0838). Tonight and tomorrow, 8pm

CARDIFF: Conductor Grant Llewellyn, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the BBC National Chorus of Wales celebrate St David's Day with a performance of Haydn's *The Creation*. With Rebecca Evans, soprano; John Mark Minley, tenor; and Neal Davies, baritone. St David's Hall, The Hayes (01222 80844). Tomorrow, 7.30pm

EDINBURGH: Traverse Theatre Company presents the European premiere of Ariel Dorfman's play, *Widows*, in collaboration with Tony Kushner. *Widows* tells of the unspoken anguish and anger experienced by the widows, wives and daughters whose men have disappeared from a village torn apart by civil war. Directed by Ian Brown. Traverse, Cambridge Street (0131-228 1404). Preview tonight and tomorrow, 8pm

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

House full, returns only. Some seats available. Seals at all prices

JOHANNA KANT: Excellent production of Chekhov's first produced play, *Uncle Vanya*. Directed by Mark Wing-Clay. Alhambra, Almeida Street, N1 (0171-359 4404). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; Sun, 3pm

LAUGHTER ON THE 23RD FLOOR: Neil Simon's funny account of working among a team of accountants for a commercial firm. Premiered in the 1950s. Gaiety Theatre, 100 Strand, WC2 (0171-306 8891). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; Sun, 3pm

COCKROACH, WHOP: Jean Wallace's play set in a south London estate. Commissioned by the Royal Court Theatre. Royal Court Theatre, 13-15, Red Bank, WC1 (0171-306 8891). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; Sun, 3pm

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER: A play about the decline of the American dream. Directed by John Crowley. Royal Court Theatre, 13-15, Red Bank, WC1 (0171-306 8891). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; Sun, 3pm

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MUSIC: Women political but incorrect; virtuoso pianism; and perfumed Debussy

Self-destruct programme

One easy way to turn a performance into a "happening" is to have a pretentious-looking programme, and the glossy cardboard creation supplied for the premiere of *Passages* stood an unlikely 28 high. Alas, it was nearly the worst thing about this event in which something should really have "happened", given that no fewer than six composers and four poets were involved.

Commissioned and produced by the Women's Playhouse Trust, *Passages* is described as a song cycle, but it sounds more like cabaret and was presented as theatre. It was an uncomfortable reminder that the history of musical theatre is littered with the corpses of well-intentioned works. No one can doubt the sincerity of all those involved: many people recognise the horrors of war, racism, dispossession and displacement with which *Passages* deals. But those who conceived it forgot that drama can seldom stand next to the daily reality as projected on television. And, with its all-female creators and performers drawn deliberately from different cultural backgrounds, there was a stifling excess of PC about the project.

Several of the 20 numbers were smart, some were well performed, but Jules Wright's blank staging obscured many of these virtues. The singers occupied a giant mattress on which at one point they planned flowers; but



Meaningful or meaningless? The glossy publicity face of *Passages*

most of the time they sat, stood or postured, caught in their various predicaments. All the music could have been given as cabaret or in concert – and without amplification. Indeed, few of the singers needed it, and its only effect was to deaden the words of the specially written poems. Balance between the voices and the Endymion Ensemble, conducted by an energetic Wasth Kant, could have been better.

Two composers contributed just one number each: Paul Peabody's starkly effective *In my Country* was sung by the word-responsive mezzo Hymenich, and Roxana Panufnik's *My Dark-eyed Baby* had an easy flow. In contrast, there was too much aimless music from Ruth Byrne, although at least in her *Hospital Song* (so effective words by Jackie Kay) the monotony was apt.

Katie Campbell's lyrics, filled with good images, inspired some of the best pieces. Jane Gardner's setting of her *Lullaby* was a highlight, and its sub-Gershwin lines were sung hauntingly by the soprano Lynne Davies. Jenny Miller, Thelma Olafimhin and Annemarie Sand made good vocal contributions wherever possible.

JOHN ALLISON

Beauty without soul

AUDIENCE can be strangely revealing creatures. The minute Evgeny Kissin's latest piano recital was over, the Festival Hall marketplace was vibrant: books were being browsed, CDs listened to and acquired, tillers were snatching out countless receipts. Was this the behaviour of an audience deeply moved, satisfyingly nourished by the music they had just heard? Or was it the reaction to an evening of highly charged and often thrilling entertainment?

At 26, Kissin is becoming

THE TIMES FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997



POP 1

U2 try so hard to be trendy on their new album, but *Pop* lacks authentic snap and crackle



POP 2

... and James's attempt to keep up with the pace is more mishmash than *Whiplash*



POP 3

... but Suzanne Vega gives her eclectic artistry a twist to good effect on *Nine Objects of Desire*



POP 4

... and, in concert, Steve Earle captivated his fans with a vintage display of bleak lyricism

POP ALBUMS: The band that dictated trends for so long now follows them, says David Sinclair

U2 in peril of losing the edge

U2 *Pop* (Island 524 3340 £13.99) THESE are trying times for supergroups. If R.E.M. can fail to hit their sales targets with an album as good as *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*, then anyone is vulnerable to the restless mood of record buyers. In the past, U2 have been uncannily adept at judging how and when to ring the changes, and *Pop* confirms them as the consummate rock strategists. But although it is a resourceful, intelligent and at times rewarding record, *Pop* is not a great U2 album.

It starts with the wonderful *Discothèque*, a flurry of neat, jokey words, ingeniously double-tracked in different octaves. It suggests a bold, hip, dance-rock direction, an impression confirmed by the bustling techno rhythm and industrial sound effects of *Mofo*, in which Bono delivers a lyric of mortal intensity in a croaky moan that gradually rises to a tortured falsetto.

However, the promise of these two tracks fails to materialise as the album then drifts into more traditional territory with the melancholy evangelism of *If God Will Send His Angels* and *Staring at the Sun*. With the exception of the lovely, rootsy *The Playboy Mansion*, tunes are generally in short supply, a deficiency which the various production tricks do not altogether remedy.

The cumulative effect of so much religious imagery eventually becomes tiresome, and a bunching up of slow and/or unstructured numbers causes the album to tail off towards the end. It is not that U2 have

U2 — (from left) Bono, Adam Clayton, the Edge and Larry Mullen — have not lost the plot on their album, *Pop*, so much as surrendered the initiative

lost the plot, so much as surrendered the initiative.

Whereas *Zooropa* and *Achtung Baby* were delightful new chapters in the story of pop, *Pop* sounds as if the band have been listening to the Prodigy and Tricky without quite working out where to go

with these dynamic new sounds.

JAMES *Whiplash* (Fontana 524 354 £13.99) HAVING retreated from the wilfully experimental approach of their previous al-

bum, *Wah Wah*, James display signs of Simple Minds syndrome on the more conventional half of *Whiplash*. There is nothing wrong, per se, with songs such as *Lost a Friend*, *Homeboy on Street* or *Star*, with their sturdy guitar-driven structures and gliding, arena-pop choruses. But they do betray a certain hardening of the creative arteries.

As if to counter such accusations, the group adopts a self-consciously radical approach on several other songs. But, apart from the country-tinged shuffle of *Waltzing Along*, these are not very good. *Greenpeace* is a PC polemic about man's malevolent impact on the environment; *Go to the Bank* offers a strange, electro-pop vision of consumerist hell; and *Watering Hole* wanders unsteadily down the hypnotic, trip-hop avenue. The end result is more mishmash than *Whiplash*.

SUZANNE VEGA *Nine Objects of Desire* (A&M 540 583 £13.49) SUZANNE VEGA is one of those people who looks different in every photograph, and there is a similarly elusive quality to her music. Her folk roots remain, most obviously in her wordplay, but songs such as *Caramel* and *Thin*

Man now have delicious jazz and Latin influences. Add the dreamy quality of Mitchell Froom's production to the mix and you have an album of sensitive, mercurial grace. There is often a bleak cast to Vega's lyrics, as on *Casual Match*: "A casual match in a very dry field/Fire and ash is the season's yield". But the choruses of *Headshots* and *No Cheap Thrill* have the kind of instant uplift that would make even a pure pop songwriter happy.

REPUBLICA *Republica* (Deconstruction/BMG 74321 410522 £11.99) AS A band composed of refugees from N-Joi (singer Saffron), Flowered Up (keyboard player Tim Dorney) and Bow Wow Wow (drummer Dave Barbarossa), Republica would have been labelled a supergroup in an earlier era. Instead, they have gone for the Bush-patented "big in America but still to make it at home" tag, thanks to the modest overseas success of their single *Ready to Go* and this debut album.

Operating on the cusp of dance and what the Americans call modern rock, their sound could not be more of the moment, even if Saffron's pouty, shorty vocals sound more Shampoo than Carbage. Still, there are many banging tracks that will not have too much trouble competing for attention in the clamorous world of young people's pop.

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Now we know the troubles he's seen

LIVE GIG

Steve Earle Mean Fiddler, NW10

They call him the hardcore troubadour, and no one could ever accuse him of not living the life he creates in song. Faithless women and feckless drifters, reckless spirits and drink and drugs that don't ease the pain — welcome to the world of Steve Earle.

He comes from Texas but moved to Nashville, he's been to prison, he's had lengthy bouts of heroin and crack addiction and has been divorced five times — remarkably similar, in fact, to one of the restless characters who populate his songs.

Today he has cleaned up, and he looked robustly healthy as he captivated the first of three sell-out audiences at the Mean Fiddler with a three-hour acoustic set. This is the best setting in which to see him. With his band Earle's songs tend to coagulate into a long, rocking display of rebel country and Southern hell-raising. On his own he displays a more complicated side.

He is a fine guitarist, adept at the finger-picking styles of the American folk and blues traditions, and he plays harmonica in the gloriously unstructured fashion of the young Bob Dylan. New songs such as *Come Back Woody Guthrie* display a sensitivity for radical American history.

namechecking Joe Hill and Emma Goldman. There are also references to Martin Luther King and Jack Kerouac, and he talks animatedly about his longstanding involvement in Native American rights programmes.

There is also a chilling rendition of *Ellis Unit One*, which he wrote for the soundtrack of the Oscar-winning *Dead Man Walking* (Earle is a committed campaigner against capital punishment).

His is a bleak world of people trapped in an American Dream gone to seed. Yet there is humour in his cracked voice, too, on songs such as *Hometown Blues* and *The Devil's Right Hand*. His most famous rebel rocker, *Copperhead Road*, is transformed as a simple mandolin stomp, and he ends with *I Ain't Ever Satisfied*, a song that perhaps sums up not only his life in general but also a career that has delivered much, but somehow always promised more.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Caitlin Moran is away. Her column returns next week

JEAN MICHEL

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- (2) Spice Spice Girls (Virgin)
- (4) The Smurfs Hits '97 - Vol 1 Smurfs (EMI TV)
- (7) Tragic Kingdom No Doubt (Interscope)
- (9) Ocean Drive Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)
- (1) Blur Blur (Food)
- (3) White on Blonde Texas (Mercury)
- (5) Evita Original Soundtrack (Warner Bros)
- (8) Blue is the Colour Beautiful South (Go! Discs)
- (23) Everything Must Go Manic Street Preachers (Epic)

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Material wealth

BOBBY WELLINS *The Satin Album* (Jazzit JTC 9607) THE appropriateness of Scottish tenor saxophonist Bobby Wellins's slightly world-weary, vulnerable but cultured sound to ballad material is so perfect that the only surprise about this recording devoted entirely to the songs on Billie Holiday's last great album, *Lady in Satin*, is that it hadn't been thought of until now.

Wellins effortlessly imbues all he plays with such plaintive tenderness that the emotional impact of the album is almost as great as that of its template. His rhythm section — pianist Colin Furbrook, bassist Dave Green and drummer Clark Tracey — play with exemplary restraint, but nevertheless manage to contribute a number of telling solos. Overall, a masterful display of controlled sensitivity from one of the most original saxophone voices in European jazz.

STANLEY TURRENTINE *Easy Walker* (Blue Note CDP 7243 8 29908 2 6) RECORDED at three 1960s sessions and featuring McCoy Tyner, Mickey Roker and Billy Cobham among others, this compilation underlines just how great is the loss of Turrentine to jazz proper, immersed as he has been for the past decade in pop-jazz and fusion. On these sessions the tenorman's big, swinging, bluesy sound — even when applied to contemporary pop vehicles such as — But Bucharach's *What the World Needs Now is Love* — is rendered all the more effective by being buoyed up by airy rhythm-section work, complemented by Tyner's sparkling solos.

CHRIS PARKER

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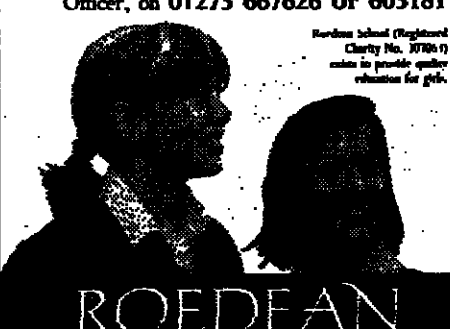
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St. Antony's

SINGAPORE, A MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY WITH A PER CAPITA INCOME OF ABOUT US\$24,600 - RANKED SECOND IN ASIA AND ABOVE SOME COUNTRIES IN WESTERN EUROPE - IS A RAPIDLY GROWING INDUSTRIAL AND BUSINESS HUB IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION.

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (NTU) is one of the two universities in Singapore. The campus is on a 200 hectare site, 2.5 km from the City centre, with modern building of futuristic yet functional design, set in lush green surroundings.

The University is international in outlook. The 16,000 students come from many different countries as do the 1000 members of the academic staff. The research performance is compared with that attained by major research universities in the world — and stands up well to that comparison. The International Journal of Engineering Education recently devoted an entire issue (vll no3 1995) to an account of NTU's approach to engineering education.

RESEARCH SCHOLARSHIPS

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY.
SINGAPORE

We are able to offer generous Research Scholarships to outstanding graduates who wish to pursue higher degree studies leading to a Ph.D. or Master's degree. The value of each scholarship, which includes free tuition, ranges from S\$1400 to S\$1500 per month (tax free). Monthly expenses of a foreign student in NTU for accommodation, food and transport varies from S\$600 to S\$950. (£1=S\$2.3)

Scholarships are available for all of the major academic units. They are listed below together with their main research thrusts.

The School of Civil and Structural Engineering has an academic staff of about 70 supported by a technical staff of 78. There are currently 75 research students.

- Foundations of High-Rise Buildings
- Underground Space Development
- Tropical Soils Engineering
- Water Resources and Environmental Engineering
- Sediment Transport and Coastal Processes
- Geographic Information Systems
- Computational Mechanics
- Structural Steel/Concrete And Connections
- Construction Management And Information Technology In Construction
- Structural Dynamics and Wind Engineering
- Transport Planning, Management and Control
- Pavement Materials and Technology

The School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering has an academic staff of about 200 supported by 150 technical staff. There are currently 230 research students.

- Power System Control and Operations
- IC Design and CAD Tools
- Information Systems Engineering
- Multimedia Systems and Networks
- Control Theory and Applications
- Computer Vision and Machine Intelligence
- Modulation, Coding and Signal Processing
- Satellite Communications
- Diamond and Thin Films
- III-V Semiconductor Materials and Devices
- Photonics

The School of Mechanical and Production Engineering has a staff of 134 supported by 104 technical staff working with 177 research students.

- Advanced Materials and Processing
- Biomedical Engineering
- Electronics Packaging
- Indoor Air Quality and Pollution Control
- Intelligent Machines and Micromachines
- Intelligent Manufacturing Systems
- Materials Modelling
- Precision Machining and Rapid Prototyping
- Product Design and Intelligent Modelling
- Robotics and Vision Systems
- Smart Materials and Structures

The School of Accountancy and Business has an academic staff of about 250.

- Actuarial Science and Insurance
- Applied Economics
- Auditing and Taxation
- Banking and Finance
- Business Law
- Financial and Management Accounting
- Human Resource and Quality Management
- Marketing and Tourism Management
- Strategy and Information Systems

The School of Applied Science has an academic staff of 77, with technical support staff of 49. It comprises two Departments with a total of 78 research students.

Computer Engineering

- Computer Architecture
- Computer Communications
- Intelligent Systems
- Real-Time Systems
- Object Oriented and Multimedia Database Systems
- Image Processing
- Computer Graphics and Visualization
- Parallel Processing

Materials Engineering

- Polymers and Composites
- Ceramics
- Thin and Thick Films
- Electronic Materials and Processing
- Fracture Mechanics
- Rheology
- Corrosion
- Surface Engineering
- Non-Destructive Testing

The School of Communication Studies has a staff of 29. It is embarking on research in the following areas:

- Media Effects
- Public Opinion and Persuasion
- International and Intercultural Communication
- Organizational Communication
- Impact of Information Technology & Society

The research activities take place in modern, extremely well equipped laboratories. The university is equipped with modern information technology systems to support the research and to encourage academic and personal communications via an extensive network. The library which holds over 450,000 volumes provides extensive on-line database search facilities.

The University invites applications for Research Scholarships by graduates (and those graduating this academic year) who have obtained a good honours degree. The Scholarship is normally available for two years for a Master's degree candidate and three years for doctoral students.

Application forms can be obtained by email: gleong@ntu.edu.sg or by fax: 00 65 791 1604 or by writing to The Registrar, Nanyang Technological University, Admin Annex, Level 1, Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798.

For more information about our University and the exciting research opportunities, visit our web site at <http://www.ntu.ac.sg/>

RACING: GROWING SUPPORT FOR IRISH-TRAINED CHAMPION HURDLE HOPE

I'm Supposin invites speculation

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

I'M SUPPOSIN emerged as a Champion Hurdle "springer" yesterday — and an indication of the Irish raider's smart Flat form helps to explain why.

The Kevin Prendergast-trained five-year-old, who will be ridden at Cheltenham by Charlie Swan, finished a fine fifth in the Irish St Leger behind stablemate Oscar Schindler. He was beaten only half a length by Pilsudski, the subsequent Breeders' Cup Turf winner, in the Royal Whip at the Curragh, and won the Ulster Harp Derby at Down Royal in July.

The heavy support for I'm Supposin, who has won both

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: MOONLIGHTER
(5.00 Newbury)
Next best: Splendid Thyme
(2.00 Newbury)

starts over hurdles this winter, prompted Ladbrokes to cut his odds from 10-1 to 8-1 yesterday. "People feel if he can translate that Flat form to hurdles he will come to Cheltenham with an outstanding chance," Mike Dillon, the bookmakers' spokesman, said.

I'm Supposin was given a rating of 112 in the end-of-season International Classification, just 1lb below the mark awarded to Alderbrook in 1995 only months before he won the Champion Hurdle, and superior to the Flat form showed by Collier Bay and Sammartino.

Prendergast, who saddled Talgo Abbas to finish third to Saucy Kili in the 1997 Champion Hurdle, said yesterday: "I



Tellicherry leaps over the water jump on the way to victory in the novices' chase at Ludlow yesterday

have had four runners at the Festival and all have been ridden, but this would be my best chance. He has always been a good horse without getting to the heights on the Flat. When he first jumped a hurdle in November the way he measured it you would think he had been jumping all his life."

The form of I'm Supposin's second hurdle success, in which he beat Finnegan's Hollow by an effortless seven lengths, was boosted when the runner-up came within inches of beating the highly regarded Istabraq, under a hands-and-heads ride at Leopardstown

earlier this month. Prendergast cast his eye over I'm Supposin's Cheltenham opponents and added: "You cannot discard a previous winner such as Collier Bay but the connections of the fancied runners all say they

want soft ground. My horse doesn't mind any ground. He's won on soft and hard and has a good cruising speed."

With more than three inches of rain having fallen at Cheltenham since February 10, the going is officially good. Edward Gillespie, the managing director, said a further inch was required before the Festival and it does not rain the days will be turned on.

His remarks came as the official opening of Cheltenham's magnificent new five-level Tattersalls grandstand, the highlight of which is a glass-fronted restaurant overlooking the home of National

Hunt racing. The 300-seater restaurant will be one of the most sought after — and expensive — viewing areas next month. The Festival price tag is £345 per person — and that does not include drinks.

With an ample supply of lavatories, bars and Tote betting booths, the new grandstand should help to ease the crush which has been a feature of the Festival in recent years as crowds build up to 60,000 on Gold Cup day.

The Horserace Totalisator Bill, which will enable the Tote to bet on non-sporting events for the first time, received the Royal Assent yesterday.

Bahhare's progress delights Dunlop

By JULIAN MUSCAT

BAHHARE, ante-post favourite for the 2,000 Guineas, has resumed faster work in preparation for the Flat season's first classic at Newmarket on May 3. The unbeaten son of Woodman is to warm up for the one-mile test in the Craven Stakes, run over the Guineas course and distance two weeks earlier.

"We have just started to increase the tempo," Bahhare's trainer, John Dunlop, said yesterday from his Arundel base. "I am delighted with the way he has come through the winter. He has strengthened through his back, loin and quarters and he is taking his work well. I would like to get a prep race into him — it wouldn't do him any harm to gain some more experience."

A half-brother to the 1995 champion miler, Bahri, Bahhare was assessed 2b below Revogue in the International Classification published last month. However, he is preferred to Robert Sangster's colt in 2,000 Guineas betting lists on the strength of his performance in the Champagne Stakes at Doncaster, where he mastered the subsequent winner of the Dewhurst Stakes, by 3½ lengths in course record time.

In the close season, Bahhare spent four days with veterinarians at the equine hospital in Dubai, emerging with a clean bill of health. Plans for him to spend the winter in Dubai were later revised. By contrast, Salm, a stablemate of Bahhare, has been in the emirate for four months.

NEWBURY

2.00 Get Real	3.30 THE TOISEACH (nap)
2.30 Top Javelin	4.30 Holland House
3.00 High Altitude	5.00 Flindley Wood
Carl Evans 4.00 Miss Millbrook	

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

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RUGBY UNION

England can bide their time and win

Rob Andrew counsels against an adventurous start that could hand the game to France



Several commentators are urging England to start attacking France from the first minute at Twickenham tomorrow. They suggest style, whereas I would promote caution. The notion that if England can succeed in an all-out offensive at the end of matches, then they should be able to do so from the start, is naive. Frankly, these people misunderstand the game.

Rugby is about attrition as much as it is about flowing movement. It is obvious that an opposition defence is fitter and better organised at the start than it is later in a game. It is then that defenders drop off half a yard and gaps open. England would be handing France victory on a plate were they to begin crazily, fall two or three penalty goals behind, and find themselves playing catch-up.

Perhaps England's only undoing would be if they did force the game. This is now a confident, relaxed England, who know what they are doing. A controlled, patient build-up is again what is required. Those who would have them playing off-the-cuff from the start also seem to forget that the opposition this time is considerably stronger than England have faced so far in the five nations' championship.

I liked the look of England's schedule from the start, and they have fulfilled most expectations. It has been the ideal preparation for the France game: a comfortable home victory against a weak Scotland side and then an even better win in Ireland. Of course, it could be the precursor to a fall, but I doubt it. Even at the best of times, the French do not relish the trip to Twickenham.

In the majority of international matches, but especially against France, the physical battle up front dictates results. There is nothing to frighten the England front row. Mark Regan and Graham Rowntree were at their best in Dublin. Martin Johnson and Simon Shaw, in the second row, should be confident of winning a lot of ball. In the back row, Lawrence Dallaglio is in his rightful place at blindside flanker. Richard Hill looks

increasingly impressive, and Tim Rodber is riding high after a storming performance against Ireland.

France can — and I am sure will — release Abdelatif Benazzi, a one-man pack, off the scrums, but I expect England to close him down. The problem with having such a well-known danger man is that the opposition does its homework on him. We did the same in the days of Serge Blanco and Pierre Berbizier. We knew their threat, and sought deliberately to blunt it, often successfully.

Without Ntamack, Saint-André, Castaignède, or Roumat, France, vitally, are missing players of character and international experience. Good individuals have taken their places. Like New Zealand, France churn out players of flair and quality, but it is an unsettled side and one that appears to be not quite sure where it is going.

At Toulouse, Pierre Villepreux was responsible for one of the great club sides. He is assistant coach to Jean-Claude Skrela and the two are looking to produce an ambitious style of play. In the defeat of Wales, though, France made mistakes that would play into England's hands should they be repeated tomorrow.

It is ten years since France won at Twickenham. This fact should be rammed home, because France are acutely aware of it and are intimidated by it. The area where England have excelled in recent years against them is defence, perhaps because everyone knows what France are capable of producing.

There are two reasons to fear the French. One is their sheer physicality up front. The other is their unpredictability. Lay off them even for a couple of seconds and they are quite capable of producing something glorious.

To use a cricket analogy, England are compiling a solid century. Only if the gaps are there should they go for them, but confidence is high and, although not on the scale of the first two victories, I would be surprised if England did not emerge winners again.



Tait breaks clear, wearing the colours of Newcastle, the club that brought him back to rugby union

Tait offers true professionalism

Mark Souster meets the Scotland centre with the ability to revive their season

ONE of the things Alan Tait did with his first cheque from Widnes rugby league club nine years ago was to buy a plot of land in Kelso, on which he had a house built. Despite moving to the North of England, he always intended to return to his roots. For him, as a passionate Scot — the Cumbrian accent notwithstanding — the Borders were home.

The advent of professionalism in rugby union enabled him to fulfil his wish sooner than expected. When Rob Andrew invited him to join Newcastle, it suited his needs perfectly. His selection for the national side to play Ireland at Murrayfield tomorrow was a natural progression.

It was difficult for his father, also named Alan, who went south from Kelso 30 years earlier to join the paid ranks — with Workington. While Tait Sr encountered hostility on his return, the welcome accorded the younger Tait was symptomatic of

the new spirit of openness within rugby. Kelso greeted him like a long-lost son, while many in the wider rugby community fumed that as the instant answer to Scotland's ills.

"I'll have to score ten tries and kick 15 goals to live up to it," Tait said yesterday. He understands why expectations are high but insists they are unrealistic. What he can offer is a mental hardness forged in rugby league and through years as a professional sportsman, something his Scotland colleagues are only beginning to experience. "I was surprised that players should immediately be expected to be fitter and stronger just because they were full time," he said.

"I guarantee it will take a good couple of years before the younger players appreciate what it all means. It is a job, not fun and games. "It is no use me coming up to Scotland and being a shy little boy. I am 32 and feel I can have an input. I'll be asking David Johnston [coach] to the Scotland backs if I can put a bit into the training."

To Tait, rugby, of whichever code, is intrinsically a simple game. "The ball is the same shape, you tackle, you pass and still score tries. So it hasn't been hard. Anyway, it's too late for an old dog to learn new tricks."

The impact he made on the Scotland side last month, when a strong Welsh team was beaten by 50 points, has left people hoping for a repeat performance tomorrow, when he wins his ninth cap, ten years on from his international debut. His influence and organisational skills were

readily evident in that A international, yet he admits to having been "frightened to death". He recalled: "I kept looking at the Welsh team thinking, 'I am up against Leigh Davies, the best centre in Britain last year, and I'm going to be shown up'."

He was not and the call for his reinstatement was heeded. Now, Murrayfield awaits. "The wife says she'll give me a clout if tears start coming down my face when I'm singing *Flower of Scotland*. Back in 1988 we sang the National Anthem, which didn't have the same feeling to it."

After two depressing defeats in the five nations' championship, Tait knows a victory against Ireland is paramount. "We were unlucky against Wales. England were just too strong and, if we don't watch out, they will pull away from the rest of us. We have to beat Ireland. A win is a must. How we do it doesn't matter."

ATHLETICS

Family thrown together in common cause

By David Powell, Athletics Correspondent

THE limp handshake, the soft voice, do not fit the giant. The 6ft 5in, 20 stone, five-pints-of-milk-a-day youth with size 16½ feet who, quite possibly, is Britain's next great thrower.

At 17, Carl Myerscough is immensely big and immensely talented, an athlete who can say without sounding ridiculous that his ambition is to be an Olympic champion and world record-holder, and one whose delicate touch with a paint brush is as much appreciated at Millfield School as is his power with a shot and discus.

"Very artistic," his art master says, and if gold is not yet Myerscough's favourite colour, it may become so. "Training is the most important thing in my life," he said. He eats enormously, sleeps ten hours a night to be fresh for his workouts, and has set his sights on European and world junior gold medals before leaving the age group.

This weekend, by way of a stepping stone, Myerscough competes for the Great Britain Under-20 team in a three-nations international in Chemnitz, Germany. At the same time, David Myerscough has been fighting the difficult fight that most sporting fathers face sooner or later: trying to remain a match for junior.

Until recently, Myerscough Sr, though no longer his son's better or equal as a thrower, was still level in bench pressing. "He has just beaten me by 2½ kilos," David Myerscough said. "He did 162½ and I did 160." It is not, though, time to give up. While Carl is in Germany, dad will be out to prove that he is among the best fifty-somethings in Europe.

Over the next three days, some 1,300 competitors, from 33 countries, aged between 35 and 95, will contest the European indoor veterans championships in Birmingham. Myerscough Jr has been as much a source of encourage-

ment to his father as his father has to him and Myerscough Sr is optimistic of a medal in the over-50s shot.

A former Lancashire discus champion, Myerscough Sr returned to the sport four years ago, after a 20-year lay-off, to provide competition and inspiration for his son.

"If I can still do it, it will encourage him," Myerscough Sr, 53, said. Years ago, with a lightweight shot bought for Carl, they would practise together in a local park.

"We used to make it competitive to draw the best out of each other and it soon became that Carl was as enthusiastic as I was," he said. "Now he has taken over as the motivator."

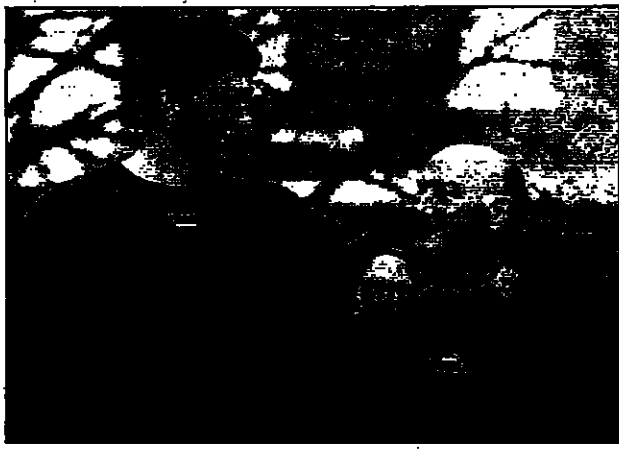
"When they start eclipsing you, you do not like to feel you are going downhill. You know it happens, but you try to hold on to your youth as long as you can. I am involved in the sport that Carl is in and it adds to the motivation and purpose for doing it."

At 6ft 5in, and 16 stone, Myerscough Sr is less physically imposing than his son. "Strength-wise, there is not a lot of difference but he is more athletic and has better coordination, timing and range," Myerscough Sr said. "I think I have passed on to him that wish and willpower, and ability to train hard."

Such is Myerscough Jr's potential that John Godina, the shot put world champion, from the United States, has agreed to work with him when the young Briton goes to the University of California, Los Angeles, for three weeks at Easter.

Myerscough Sr will be without his training partner but, no matter, he has another one at home. Carl's younger brother, Grant.

"I will try and train Grant while he is away and not waste time," Myerscough Sr said. These fifty-somethings are irreplaceable.



Carl Myerscough towers over his father, David

The key issues for school governors

February 28
March 7
March 14
March 21

For four weeks *The Times Educational Supplement* will be running free guides for school governors. They offer all the facts, advice and inspiration you need to get the most out of being a governor in 1997. In addition, Joan Sallis (a governor herself) writes regularly from the front line. So visit your newsagent and don't miss your copy of *The TES* from Friday 28 February.

TES Internet Service at <http://www.tes.co.uk>
TES THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

FOR THE RECORD									
BASKETBALL									
EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP: England 79 Russia 61									
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION (NBA): Sacramento 111 Boston 100, Detroit 117 Golden State 117 Orlando 89 Miami 88, Indiana 82 Seattle 76 Atlanta 78 Milwaukee 72, Minnesota 108 San Antonio 82 Phoenix 111 Philadelphia 104, LA Clippers 82 Vancouver 80, New York 96 Portland 95 (OT)									
CYCLING									
CALPE, Spain: Tour of Valencia: Second stage (100km): 1. M Fondriest (I) 4hr 45m 2. D. Hargrove (GB) 4hr 46m 3. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 4hr 47m 4. M. Zeng (GB) 4hr 48m 5. J. Korybko (USA) 4hr 49m 6. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 4hr 50m 7. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 4hr 51m 8. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 4hr 52m 9. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 4hr 53m 10. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 4hr 54m									
FOOTBALL									
Wednesday's late results: FA Cup: First round: Derby County 3 Coventry City 2, First round replay: Chelsea 1 Leicester City 0 (aet) FA CUPING PREMIERSHIP: Southampton 0 West Ham 0 COCA-COLA CUP: Semi-final, first leg: Sheffield Wednesday 2 Arsenal 1, second leg: Arsenal 2 Sheffield Wednesday 1, aggregate: Arsenal 3 Sheffield Wednesday 3, Arsenal advance on penalties (Pen: 4. M. Zeng (GB) 5. J. Korybko (USA) 6. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 7. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 8. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 9. J. S. Spruyell (USA) 10. J. S. Spruyell (USA))									
NATIONAL LEAGUE: First division: Swindon Town 3 Birmingham City 2, second division: Scorton 2 Hartlepool 1, third division: Carlisle United 2 Hartlepool 1, fourth division: Carlisle United 2 Hartlepool 1									
BELL'S SCOTLAND LEAGUE: Second division: Livingston 2 Dundee 1, third division: East Stirling 2 Arbroath 0									
DN MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Newport AFC 1 Gwent 0, second division: Midland division: VS Rugby 2 Llanelli 1, third division: VS Rugby 2 Llanelli 1, fourth division: VS Rugby 2 Llanelli 1									
UNBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Boston United 1 Gillingham 1, first division: Farnley Celtic 2 Stockbridge 1									
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: South T 6 Crayke 1, second division: South T 6 Crayke 1, third division: South T 6 Crayke 1, fourth division: South T 6 Crayke 1									
WELSH LEAGUE: Quarter-final replay: Carmarthen 2 Holywell 0									
JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: First division: Eastleigh 1 Bournemouth 0, second division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, third division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, fourth division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1									
PONTNANT CENTRAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Bilton Wanderers 2 Stockbridge 1, second division: Bilton Wanderers 2 Stockbridge 1, third division: Bilton Wanderers 2 Stockbridge 1, fourth division: Bilton Wanderers 2 Stockbridge 1									
WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: First division: Chatham Town 0 Herne Bay 2, second division: Chatham Town 0 Herne Bay 2, third division: Chatham Town 0 Herne Bay 2, fourth division: Chatham Town 0 Herne Bay 2									
NORTH HAVEN NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, second division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, third division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, fourth division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1									
JEWSON EASTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, second division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, third division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, fourth division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1									
JEWSON WESTERN COUNTIES LEAGUE: Premier division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, second division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, third division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1, fourth division: Bournemouth 0 Eastleigh 1									
SCHOOLS MATCHES: English Schools: Epsom 1, second division: Epsom 1, third division: Epsom 1, fourth division: Epsom 1									
RUGBY UNION									
England v France (at Twickenham, 8.0)									
Scotland v Ireland (at Murrayfield, 4.0)									
Under-21 International matches: England v France (at Twickenham, 8.0)									
Under-21 International matches: Scotland v Ireland (at Murrayfield, 4.0)									
STUDENT INTERNATIONAL: England v France (at Twickenham, 8.0)									
CLUB MATCHES: Gwent v Newport (7.15)									
Haverhill v Kilsby (7.15), Polesden v Molesey (8.0), Macclesfield v Buxton (8.0)									
OTHER SPORT									
BASKETBALL: Bundesliga League: Bayern v Unicomb (8.0)									
BOWLS: Women's English national indoor championship (at York)									
SWIMMING: British Club team championships (at Stockport)									
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	Depth (cm)	Conditions Piste	Runs to resort	Weather (Epm)	Last snow	
	L	U	Off-piste	°C		
AUSTRIA						
Ischgl	0 40	good	varied	closed	snow	2 27/2
Obertauern	40 150	good	powder	good	snow	2 27/2
Schladming	30 40	good	varied	icy	snow	4 27/2
		(Upper slopes very good with new snow)				
FRANCE						
Alpe d'Huez	115 280	good	powder	good	sun	3 27/2
Avoriaz	165 165	good	powder	good	fine	0 27/2
		(Excellent skiing; plenty of powder everywhere)				
ITALY						
Livigno	105 205	good	powder	fair	snow	-3 27/2
Gallo	65 70	good	varied	fair	fine	-6 26/2
		(Some hardy patches but mostly very good)				
SWITZERLAND						
Rosshorn	40 150	good	powder	good	snow	-2 27/2
Verbier	50 230	good	powder	good	sun	-4 27/2
		(Fabulous powder skiing with new snow)				

Source: Ski Club of Great Britain. L - lower slopes; U - upper; art - artificial

CRICKET

Cronje gets ready to do battle in the ultimate test

By SIMON WILDE

SOUTH Africa and Australia begin a three-match series in Johannesburg today that, inevitably, will be seen by some as a decider for the unofficial world championship of Test cricket.

Under a system for calculating such an unofficial championship devised by Matthew Engel, the editor of *Wisden*, the table, for which is given below — Australia and South Africa hold first and second places respectively. The last time the countries met in South Africa, three years ago, the series was drawn, so, if South Africa win this time, they would move to within two points of Australia.

"We obviously recognise Australia as the best Test playing nation in the world after they beat West Indies home and away," Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, said yesterday. "If we beat them in the series, we'll

be right up there with the best in the world; but calling ourselves world champions would be a little naive when you consider we have yet to play Pakistan or West Indies in a full Test series."

Mark Taylor, the Australia captain, declined — as he has consistently done — to talk of world championships. "It is another series for us and we want to win it," he said.

Australia return to the Wanderers with some trepidation

TABLE

	P	W	W	W
Australia	14	21	+7	
South Africa	12	17	+5	
India	13	17	+5	
West Indies	11	14	+3	
Pakistan	12	14	+3	
Sri Lanka	14	12	+2	
England	14	11	+3	
Zimbabwe	10	4	-6	
New Zealand	16	8	-8	

Table based on the most recent matches. Points and wins, between each pair of teams since 1980. Two points are awarded for winning a series or one-off Test, one point for drawing.

Lloyd planning to be better prepared

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

DAVID LLOYD, coach to the England cricket team, has already mapped out his plans for the tour of the West Indies next winter. They include a two-week stay in Antigua for preparation purposes and time set aside for families later in the tour.

Lloyd believes that there are lessons to be learnt from the campaigns in Zimbabwe and New Zealand this winter — over a side warm-up games in the first fortnight. The tour programme includes five Tests and five one-day internationals, which will be played after the Test series has been completed.

Lloyd said he was greatly encouraged by the competitive environment within the England set-up. "We now have a strong nucleus of players — especially when you look at what we have achieved this winter," he said.

"The under-19s went to Pakistan and won, the A team went to Australia and won and we have been successful in New Zealand."

West Indies before the match programme begins.

"When we arrived in Zimbabwe we were fit but they caught us cold by picking damn near a Test side in the first game. I don't want to be caught out like that again," Lloyd said.

England leave for the West Indies soon after the turn of the year and Lloyd is planning to have a couple of 100 from which wives, children and girlfriends were excluded — both in terms of preparation and itinerary. The England team begins its penultimate match of the tour later today — the fourth one-day international in Auckland. England lead the five-match series 2-0, with one match tied.

Lloyd has arranged a pre-Christmas trip to Sharjah, for a one-day tournament also involving West Indies, Pakistan and India, in an effort to get his players ready for the Caribbean. But he feels that more practice and fitness work needs to be done in the

after their previous experience in 1994, when they were beaten by 197 runs and found themselves bated by a highly vocal crowd. "They will say things on the boundary edge about you that will hit a little bit close to home," Taylor said yesterday. "They are very personal and nasty."

Taylor feels that the crowd's behaviour contributed to Australia's defeat. It also played its part in two Australians, Merv Hughes and Shane Warne, being penalised by the International Cricket Council for verbal spats with the opposition. Hughes also reacted over-aggressively towards the crowd at one point. The Australians are guarding against a repetition this time.

Taylor feels Australia are the better prepared for what is likely to be a hard and closely fought series, having recently played five Test matches against West Indies. South Africa completed a series win over India last month.

Taylor's own form with the bat is one of his side's main worries, most of the other batsmen having made runs in the warm-up games. Another will be the bowling of Paul Adams, the South Africa left-arm wrist spinner. "We've spent a lot of time watching Adams on video and the boys are looking forward to playing against him," Geoff Marsh, the Australia coach, said.

"We've formulated a few ideas on how to play him."

South Africa's own batting appeared fragile against India, and they will miss the all-round skills of McMillan, who is recovering from injury. The pitch is expected to be less fast than usual for the Wanderers and will offer only slow turn for the spinners.

South African Breweries has put up Rdl80,000 (about £24,000) in prize-money, but R250,000 will be withheld if the series is drawn as an incentive to positive play.

The second Test is in Port Elizabeth from March 14 to 18 and the third in Centurion from March 21 to 25.

SOUTH AFRICA (probable): W J Cronje (captain), G Krieger, A C Hudson, J H Kallis, D J Gagne, J M Potgieter, S M Pollock, D J Richardson, L Klusener, A A Donald, P R Adams.

AUSTRALIA (probable): M A Taylor (captain), M L Hayden, M TGB, M E Waugh, G S Blewett, S R Waugh, M G Sewn, J A Healy, S K Warne, J N Gillespie, G D McGrath.



Katia Seitzinger, of Germany, speeds her way to the sixth fastest time during practice yesterday for the women's World Cup downhill race in Hakuba, Japan, today

SNOOKER

Past form points to Hendry

By PHIL YATES

STEPHEN HENDRY will be an overwhelming favourite to win his fifteenth consecutive match in world-ranking events, and his 23rd in 24 outings, when he meets James Wattana, of Thailand, here in Malta today for a semi-final in the European Open.

His career record against Wattana — the score is 14-3 in the world champion's favour — is a strong indication that the form book will prove reliable. Wattana is also handicapped by having to become acquainted with a new cue.

During a practice session only two days before travelling to the tournament, Wattana irreparably damaged his old cue while larking around. He has borrowed a replacement from a friend but, inevitably, does not feel com-

fortable with it, despite recording hard-fought wins over Hendry's fellow Scots, Euan Henderson and Chris Small, in the previous rounds.

During his 5-3 victory over Jon Birch, Hendry compiled a break of 124. It meant that he has run up at least 30 centuries in competition in each of the past eight seasons. The £9,050 that he is guaranteed to collect here carries his total prize-money to more than £300,000 for the ninth successive campaign.

In yesterday's first quarter-final, Ken Doherty recovered from a 3-1 interval deficit

against Peter Ebdon to establish a 4-3 lead and move within one frame of a semi-final against Stephen Lee or John Higgins, the world No 2. Doherty, who had lost his eight most recent encounters with Ebdon, began his recovery with a break of 45 in the fifth frame before drawing level at 3-3 with a green-to-black clearance that included a fearless pink, using the rest, down the side cushion.

Doherty, by now clearly full of confidence, also picked up the seventh frame with a break of 80 as Ebdon lost his early certainty.

EQUESTRIANISM

Confidence high as riders head for Paris

By JENNY MACARTHUR

JOHN WHITAKER, who led an unprecedented clean sweep by British riders at the Bologna World Cup qualifier last weekend, will attempt a second successive victory when he competes in the Paris qualifier this weekend. Paris is the venue for the thirteenth of 15 qualifiers for the Volvo Showjumping World Cup final, which takes place in Sweden from April 30 to May 4. The top 19 riders from the Western European League qualify.

Two weeks ago, Michael Whitaker, who was third in the London qualifier at Olympia in December, was the only Briton in the top 19. However, Bologna — where the Whitakers, Geoff Billington and Robert Smith filled the top four places — has altered the picture. Michael and John Whitaker are second and ninth in the league, respectively. Smith is joint fifteenth and Billington joint eighteenth. All four compete this weekend, together with Nick Skelton, who is in 25th place.

Although John Whitaker has never failed to qualify for the final since the World Cup started in 1979, his record had looked under threat this season after disappointing outings in Geneva, London and Bordeaux. He was lying 32nd before Bologna. "I definitely needed more points," Whitaker said.

Grannusch, the 18-year-old gelding who brought him the timely victory, is resting this weekend. In his place, Whitaker will bring out his Berlin winner, Welham.

His younger brother, Michael, will rely on Ashley, an outstanding nine-year-old. Winner of the 1995 Foxhunter Championship, Ashley has performed admirably this season.

Skelton is bringing out Showtime, his Olympic horse, this weekend and, with Smith having the choice of his Olympia World Cup winner, Tees Hanauer, or the eight-year-old Big Time, on which he was fourth in Bologna, and Billington riding It's Otto, his Olympic horse, hopes of another British victory are high.

IN BRIEF

Durham's batting bolstered by Speight

DURHAM completed their third close-season signing by acquiring Martin Speight from Sussex on a three-year contract yesterday. Speight follows two other batsmen — Nick Speak, of Lancashire, and Jon Lewis, of Essex — to a county that scored only four championship centuries last year.

Nottinghamshire were also interested in Speight but he was anxious to resume full-time wicketkeeping, which Durham want him to do. Speight is the fifth player to leave Sussex in seven months.

Belt chance

Boxing: Ryan Rhodes, the British light middleweight champion from Sheffield, will after all get his chance to become the quickest to win a Lonsdale Belt outright. Rhodes will try to win the British title for the third time against Del Bryan, of Nottingham, at Reading on March 14.

New challenge

Swimming: Nick Gillingham is to launch a new legal challenge to the successful Russian appeal against the disqualification of Andrei Korniev from third place in the 200 metres breaststroke at the Olympic Games in Atlanta last year. Fresh evidence has emerged this week that Bromanian, the drug for which Korniev tested positive, is performance-enhancing.

Downing ahead

Rowing: Downing, the leaders of men's division one, had a grandstand view as the next six boats bumped out in the Cambridge University Lent races. Christ's were the last to go when caught by 1st and 3rd Trinity ten strokes after the railway bridge.

No police action

Football: Police have decided not to take any action after the brawl between Chesterfield and Plymouth Argyle players on Saturday in which four players were sent off by Richard Foulain. The FA is awaiting the referee's report before deciding whether to take any action.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN
BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

To bid a Grand Slam which has little to spare in the way of high cards usually requires some special tools. The hand below occurred in the 1997 Macallan International Pairs. It was bid to Seven Spades at five of the eight tables, and came home when the hearts broke 3-2.

AKQ9 N J875
KQ8543 W A10
Q A107
J6 A753

Some of the successful auctions:

North South
1H 1S
3S (1) 3NT (2)
4D (3) 4H (4)
4NT (4) 5C (5)
7S Pass

(1) Not forcing, and valuing the hand conservatively. Certainly there was no guarantee that East-West could make Four Spades if East had an unsuitable minimum.

(2) An inquiry bid — many players have the agreement that, if they have found an eight-card major fit, they use 3NT to ask for further information rather than proposing it as a place to play.

(3) Cue-bids (4) Blackwood (5) 0 or 3 aces — clearly three after East's 3NT and Four Heart bids.

The other successful auctions all started with West "splintering" on the second

round. This was the Norwegian sequence:

Heinrich Helgemo
1H 1S
4D (1) 4NT (2)
5S (3) 5NT (4)
7S (5) Pass

(1) Valuing the hand as being worth a rise to Four Spades. Four Diamonds guaranteed four-card spade support and showed a singleton diamond.

(2), (3) Five-ace Blackwood, and a reply showing two of the five "aces" (the king of spades counting as an ace), and the queen of trumps.

(4) East cannot possibly tell whether the playing strength is there for Seven Spades. But, by bidding 5NT, which asks for specific kings, he confirms that his side has all the aces.

(5) Knowing he is facing a hand with three aces he can count a probable ten tricks in spades and hearts, two minor-suit aces, and a ruff somewhere for the thirteenth trick.

Forrester and Robson bid identically up to 5NT. Then Forrester bid Six Hearts and, when Robson bid Six Spades in tempo, went on to Seven Spades. If Forrester thought the hand worth Seven Spades over 5NT, he would have done better to bid it immediately — that way he would have avoided the ethical problems that might have occurred had Robson bid Six Spades slowly.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

TOSTON
a. A toasted ham sandwich
b. A pebble for skimming
c. A silver coin

SELETRIC
a. A typewriter
b. Picky
c. Type of proportional voting

TENORINO
a. A miniature éclair
b. A high tenor
c. A soft wind from the sea
SONGKOK
a. Sweet noodle stew
b. A love song
c. A skull-cap

Answers on page 42

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Oxford v Cambridge

The annual Varsity match takes place tomorrow afternoon at the RAC Club in Pall Mall. The first match was held at the City of London Chess Club in 1873 with more than 400 spectators and grandmasters Zukertort and Blackburne analysing the games for the public. Given the status of Zukertort and Blackburne at that time, that is rather as if Anand and Kramnik turned up to comment now.

The standard of play in 1873 was low and Howard Staunton thought the contestants "as a rule, very ignorant of chess theory". Nevertheless, the Cambridge team, according to the standard work *Cambridge Chess* by R.G. Eales of the University of Kent at Canterbury, contained some interesting characters.

Between 1873 and 1914 two presidents of the Cambridge club were J.N. Keynes, father of the economist, and Alastair Crowley, the noted Satanist. There was only one president with claims to be a strong player, namely H.E. Atkins, who won the British championship nine times. Between 1891 and 1894, Atkins was a scholar at Peterhouse, the college which had outlived chess almost 600 years earlier.

The following game is one of the most spectacular played the history of the match.

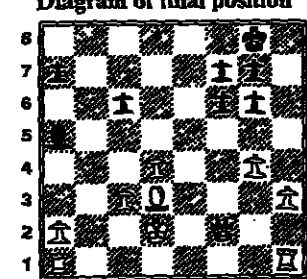
White: M.J. Corden (Oxford)

Black: A.H. Williams (Cambridge)
Varsity match, 1970

Alekhine's Defence

1 e4 Nf6
2 Nc3 d5
3 exd5 Qxd5
4 Nf3 Qb6
5 Bc3 Qc6
6 Bb3 Qd6
7 Qd2 Qc6
8 Qc3 Qb6
9 Qb3 Qc6
10 Qc3 Qb6
11 Qd2 Qc6
12 Qc3 Qb6
13 Qd2 Qc6
14 Qc3 Qb6
15 Qd2 Qc6
16 Qc3 Qb6
17 Qd2 Qc6
18 Qc3 Qb6
19 Qd2 Qc6
20 Qc3 Qb6
21 Qd2 Qc6
22 Qc3 Qb6
23 Qd2 Qc6
24 Qc3 Qb6
25 Qd2 Qc6
26 Qc3 Qb6
27 Qd2 Qc6
28 Qc3 Qb6

Diagram of final position



White resigns
Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game King — Frias, Watson, Farley and Williams, London 1990. We are only just out of the opening but White already has a way to win immediately. Can you see it?

Solution on page 42

THE ENGLISH PATIENT. EXCLUSIVE VISITING HOURS.

Starting in Monday's 10p Times, a chance to see 12 times Oscar nominated film, 'The English Patient', a week before its official release, for free. And get a CD sampler of 'The English Patient' soundtrack.

<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

CHANGING TIMES

Tonight: the singing sixties

...the fact that the *in vitro* and *in vivo* results are in good agreement, and that the *in vivo* results are in good agreement with the results of the *in vitro* studies.

[illegible]

Auntie takes a trip — for medicinal reasons

Hey man, it's *Horizon* (BBC2). This being television and our subject being psychedelic drugs, the only real question was how long it would be before Timothy Leary popped up and advised us to "turn on, tune in and drop out." I made it 11 minutes and... but like, who's counting? That specially impregnated page of "research and trip" edition of *Radio Times* was beginning to take effect.

The makers of last night's documentary had clearly stumbled through the doors of perception some time ago. "Let's make a film about psychedelic drugs," said one with an excited groan. "Great idea, man," groaned another. "We could make the whole thing look like one giant psychedelic experience. They did — and after 30 minutes of blurred photography, slow motion and strange, stretchy special effects, I was groaning too. It was like arriving late at a party in full

swing... and remembering that you're driving."

But despite the distraction of the visual presentation, there was no obscuring the interest of the main subject. After a 30-year moratorium, psychedelic drugs such as LSD are once again being used in serious scientific research. And yes, as Bill Eagles' film showed, that research can be interpreted in two ways. While some scientists are painstakingly studying the effects that "psychedelics" (in these circles it's cool to drop the word drugs after a while) have on the brain, others are simply taking them and using their allegedly raised levels of consciousness to become computer billionaires or win Nobel prizes.

Yeah, I was right down there with the molecules when I discovered it," said Katy Mullis, a biochemist for whom the phrase "so laid-back he was horizontal" might have been invented. He

owed it all to LSD and I didn't doubt it for a minute.

Eagles, however, had not forgotten the moral high ground altogether. A more conventional-looking scientist duly popped up to remind us of the price that Leary — and indeed the scientific community — had paid for turning research into a party. Venture too far down that path, we were warned, and you reach madness, murder and Charles Manson. But not if you do it properly, responded those at the blurred edge of modern psychedelics research.

Much of this new research has concentrated on psychedelics derived from plants and consumed for centuries by native people of South America and Africa. These, we learnt, include ayahuasca, a hallucinogenic tea which is currently under great things for an understandably ecstatic and undoubtedly charismatic Christian cult in Brazil; and ibogaine, which

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

sounds like something you rub into aching joints but is actually a lot more fun.

But for me the real revelation (apart from how tedious 1960s guitar music becomes when you're not in the mood) was what psychedelics are being used for — and indeed were used for before they were outlawed in the late 1960s. In Miami, ibogaine is being used to treat cocaine addiction,

echoing work done in the late 1950s when LSD was used on heroin addicts and alcoholics. Fighting fires with fire, comes to Newcastlesman's holiday — aphorism as you will, but the next time someone stumbles up to you in the high street asking for "20p for a tab of LSD", remember — he could be on the right track.

Back in what is nothing like the real world, BBC1 had yet another new sitcom to present us with. A Perfect State was its comic origins proudly. Having been underwritten at the time of the Domesday Book, Flatby, a very low-lying fishing village on the East Coast, was never officially annexed to the United Kingdom and is therefore perfectly entitled to declare itself independent. And we are perfectly entitled to say "ooh, just like *Passport to Pimlico*."

But just like so many other things, too, Richard Hope plays the umpteenth Man from the

Ministry to be sent to quell rebellious natives various *St Trinian's* films. *Love on a Branch Line*, *Gobble* — although I am reluctant to cite the latter as the comic origin of anything and will no doubt become the umpteenth Man from the Ministry to turn native in due course. As for the enthusiastically anti-EU stance of the little, chubby Hercule Poirot coming over here to tell us how to wipe the very bottoms we sit on, the series merely takes on where *The Brittas Empire* left off.

Regardless of its derivative nature, however, there is good news. A *Perfect State* is funny and, in particular, Michael Atkens appears to have created the near-perfect part for the considerable talents of Gwen Taylor. She plays Laura: pub landlady, Deputy Mayor and driving force in Flatby. She is bossy, interfering and the sort of intimi-

dating film that makes even Rudolph Valter's Mayor quiver.

Naturally enough, she also gets the best lines. News forger there is a real world out there, she told her daughter Julie, solicitor and the village's constitutional expert. "where people are normal and civilised and don't all sleep with their first cousins." As stream starts up, she definitely the right side of promising.

Finally, let us consider *Shop Till You Drop* (Channel 4), a series that promises to reveal all about supermarket culture in the 1960s. Nothing wrong with that, except that in the past 15 months BBC2 has covered exactly the same territory not just once but twice. Susan Tully can narrate away about blink rates, role distribution and why fruit and veg is a predominantly female selection zone, but as far as I'm concerned it's a case of been there, done it, got the shopping trolley. Twice.

CHOICE

Red Dwarf
BBC2, 9.00pm

After last week's fun with *Pride and Prejudice*, the sci-fi spoof offers a relatively orthodox episode, though in this show nothing is conventional. The plot is sparked by the discovery of a three-million-year-old woman, preserved in a block of ice and still alive. Followers of the recent *Horizon* series on frozen corpses may smell a parody, though the writers Paul Alexander and Doug Naylor would have the plot suffice to know that the ice woman impregnates Craig Charles's Lister with an intelligent virus and desperate measures have to be taken to rid him of it. As usual the level of invention is high and the one-liners a delight. "This place is harder to get into than an airline chicken Kiev," complains Lister, as he tries to enter a wrecked starship.

Catherine Cookson's The Moth
ITV, 9.00pm

Lots of nasty people live in Cookson country, and awful things happen, but somehow there is always a warm glow of goodness to make the tales bearable. Which is perhaps why they are read, and viewed, by such large audiences. The new adaptation, *The Wingspread*, billed in 12 million viewers and there is no good reason why *The Moth*, the almost archetypal Cookson story, should not do as well. Jack Davenport is the hero, Robert, a carpenter who leaves the farrow shipyard to work for his uncle. It is 1913, which is why Lister still has a shipyard. Uncle Robert is a bit of a bawling brat, who accuses Robert of bashing his cousin pregnant. Forced into another move, Robert heads for a crumbling estate and a fateful encounter with two sisters. One is played by a promising newcomer, Justine Waddell, the other by the very talented Juliet Aubrey.

Silent Witness: Cease Upon the Midnight
BBC1, 9.30pm

When an Aids sufferer dies on the night of his 40th birthday, Amanda Burton's steely Dr Ryan smells a rat. And so should we, for a series with a forensic pathologist as its central character can hardly waste its time with deaths by natural causes. It has to be murder, or at the very least an assisted suicide. Get the body on the slab, let the camera linger on it and leave Dr Ryan to do her grisly best. This two-part story is by a *Casualty* writer, Jacqueline Holborough, and maintains the dour standard of a series not noted for its shafts of humour. Dr Ryan's private life contains little more joy. For one thing there is the burden of a dour sister (Ruth McCabe), while the best she can do for a sprig of romance is that old flame from many years ago, the utterly charming Detective Superintendent Ross (Mick Rord).

The Mrs Merton Show
BBC1, 10.20pm (Scotland and Wales, 10.50pm; N.I., 11.05pm)

There is the danger that when a chat show loses its bite, it becomes just another chat show. Caroline Aherne's Mrs Merton may not be there yet, but she is getting close. Perhaps she needs guests who are more easily insulted. Or perhaps the novelty of the host dressing up as a dowdy Lancashire housewife so that she can ask insulting questions is wearing off. Mrs Merton may be quick with the quips, which are often sharp and funny, but unless the guests rise to them the show is entirely lacking in substance. Sacha Distel and Jeremy Clarkson are the sofa-fodder and ten minutes after the closing credits have rolled you cannot remember a thing either of them said. Aherne would no doubt retort that this is precisely the point. The show is a vehicle for her character and the rest is incidental. Peter Waymark

6.00am GMTV (1978003)
9.25 *Win, Lose or Draw* (1073393)
9.55 *Regional News* (10568157)
10.00 *The Time, the Place* (47645)
10.30 *This Morning* (13301916)
12.20pm *Regional News* (10607751)
12.30 *News* (1) and weather (7870138)
12.55 *Wish You Were Here?* (1) (7888157)
1.25 *Home and Away* (1) (15501480)
1.50 *Murder, She Wrote* (4421003) 2.50 *Get a Life!* (5309664)
3.20 *News* (1) (4955729)
3.25 *Regional News* (1) (8000670)
3.30 *Rosie and Jim* (7016954) 3.40 *Sim Pkg* (707816) 3.50 *Saga Bunnies* (783428)
4.00 *Zzzap!* (1052268) 4.15 *Jurnal* (5309333) 4.40 *Gladiators* 4.50 *Train 2 Win* (1) (3811683)
5.10 *A Country Practice* (7359393)
5.40 *News* (1) and weather (779409)
6.00 *Home and Away* (1) (15501480)
6.25 *HTV Weather* (422515)
6.30 *HTV News* (1) (935)
7.00 *Wheel of Fortune* hosted by comedian Bradley Walsh (1) (8596)
7.30 *Coronation Street* Fraser catches Liz rifling through his private papers. Judy prepares to say a final farewell to her Mum (1) (119)
8.00 *The Bill: Rolling in It* A City trader blames his unemployed brother-in-law when drugs are found in his Lamborghini (1) (2916)
8.30 *Holding the Baby* War breaks out between Gordon and his smug neighbour over whose child is more gifted. With Nick Hancock (1) (4751)

As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25 *A Country Practice* (7888157)
1.55 *Savannah* (4423022)
2.50-3.20 *Our House* (5309664)
10.10-10.40 *Shortland Street* (7359393)
6.25-7.00 *Central News* (888393)
10.40 *Central Weekend Live* (7128119)
12.15pm *Weekly World News* (30028)
1.00 *Funky Bunker* (782888)
1.55 *Batwatch* (5602197)
2.45 *Cyber Cafe* (535061)
3.10 *Movie Club* (5609594)
3.40 *Dating the Enemy* (9068248)

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6.00am Sesame Street (56119) 7.00 *The Big Breakfast* (81577) 8.00 *Bewitched* (1) (1) (20353) 8.30 *Cartoon* (72233) 9.00 *Block* (1) (1) (40157) 12.30pm *Here's One!* (1) (1) (77759) 1.00 *Cybil* (1) (1) (2411683) 1.25 *Australia* (1) (24191374)
1.55 *Car on Admiral* (1957) *Force* with David Tomlinson as a parliamentary secretary and Bob Beca as a naval officer who switch places. Directed by Val Guest (1) (1838645)
3.30 *Travelling Light* (1) (111) 4.00 *Fifteen-to-One* (1) (848) 4.30 *Countdown* (1) (735) 5.00 *Rick Lake* (1) (4374) 5.30 *Pat Rescue* (1) (312)

6.00 TFI Friday With music from Kula Shaker and Beck. The guests include Ben Elton and Della Smith (45190)
7.00 *Channel 4 News* (1) (450521)
7.55 *The Press Photographer of the Year* Which pictures make the front page and why (318393)
8.00 *Bloom: The Mint Family* (5/6) The diverse world of mint (1) (3886)
8.30 *Brookside* Bel makes a serious accusation against Ollie (1) (2385)

9.00 Caroline in the City Caroline and the Watch Caroline and Richard bicker over their shared workspace (1) (1845)
9.30 *Spin City: The High and Mighty* Michael needs a favour from a famed New York developer. With Michael J Fox (1) (57835)
10.00 *Roseanne* The Connors tell themselves out of their minds when they accept an invitation from Andy Worth to her luxury home (1) (41886)
10.30 *Here's Johnny* Johnny Vaughan presents a mix of chat, comedy and social studies. The guests include Max Clifford (120664)
11.05 *The Girls Show* (8/12) with Patsy Palmer and Samantha Fox (626515)
11.35 *TFI Friday* (1) (468848)
12.40am *Robin* (1) (49604)
12.45 *Flava* (3/8) (91081)
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6.00am Business Breakfast (53408)
7.00 *BBC Breakfast News* (1) (88857)
7.15 *Breakfast News Extra* (1) (8335335)
9.20 *Style Challenge* (1065374)
9.45 *Kilroy* (530138)
10.30 *Can't Cook, Won't Cook* (33857)
11.00 *News* (1) and weather (5608041)
11.05 *The Really Useful Show* (3973190)
Wales 11.05 *Wales Labour Conference* (4250692)
11.35 *Change That* (581119)
12.00 *News* (1) (891887)
12.05pm *The Alphabet Game* (5594935)
12.30 *Golfing for a Song* (787870)
12.55 *The Weather Show* (34952915)
1.00 *News* (1) and weather (81954)
1.30 *Regional News* (98826739)
1.45 *Neighbours* (1) (20488190)
2.05 *The Gift of Love* (1983) with Andy Griffith and Blair Brown. A man is given a heart transplant under conditions which destroy his family and is forced to find solace with a young runaway who gives him the will to live once more. Directed by Paul Bogart (2374454)
3.30 *Playdays* (1297480) 3.50 *The Friday Zone* (3851428) 4.55 *Newsround Extra* (1) (2635409) 5.10 *Blue Peter* (1) (1032190)
5.35 *Neighbours* (1) (1) (596003)
6.00 *News* (1) and weather (515)
6.30 *Newsround South East* (867)
7.00 *Big Break* Snooker stars Terry Griffiths, Shokat Ali and Lee Richardson cue up for the snooker game show (1) (1428)
7.30 *The Top of the Pops* (751)
8.00 *Pompidou* Classic comedy with Ronnie Barker (1) (1) (7848)
8.30 *A Question of Sport* Cyclist Chris Boardman, the captain of the Welsh rugby union XV Jonathan Humphreys, high-jumper Steve Smith and Everton footballer Gary Speed take part in the sports quiz hosted by David Coleman, with team captains John Parrott and Ally McCoist (1) (9883)
9.00 *News* (1) and weather (8835)
9.30 *Silent Witness* (1/2) When the body of a man is donated to medical research, Sam uncovers evidence to suggest his death may not have been entirely natural. With Amanda Burton (1) (478363)
10.20 *The Mrs Merton Show* With guests Sacha Distel and Jeremy Clarkson (1) (777312) WALES: 10.20 *The Celluloid World of Desmond Reilly* 10.50 *The Mrs Merton Show* 11.20 *FILM: Midnight Run* 1.15 *FILM: The Legacy* 2.55 *News*
10.55 *Midnight Run* (1985) Robert De Niro plays a bounty hunter who engages in a battle of wits with crooked accountant Charles Grodin while struggling to bring him to justice. Directed by Martin Brest (5620225)
12.50am *The Legacy* (1979) Americans Katharine Ross and Sam Elliott are forced to spend time in a sinister-looking English country house after crashing their car. Directed by Richard Marquand (522492)
2.30 *Weather* (3490178)

6.00am Open University: Two Research Styles (2993303) 6.25 *Looking at What Happens in Hospital* (8218428) 6.50 *Forecasting the Economy* (5276374) 7.15 *Sea Heavens* (6355480)
7.30 *Captain Cavern* and the *Teen Angels* (1281374) 7.55 *The Really Useful Show* (7851119) 8.20 *Just So Stories* (727732) 8.35 *The Record* (874751) 9.00 *Daytime on Two: The French Experience* (5422228) 9.15 *The Biology Collection* (467461) 9.45 *Watch* (3611835) 10.00 *Children's BBC: Playdays* (50119) 10.30 *Hutch Poth* (484751) 10.50 *Cosmo and Dibs in Punjab and English* (2196335) 11.00 *Look and Read* (2355545) 11.20 *Short Circuit* (575537) 11.40 *English Time* (1293848) 12.00 *English File* (15451) 12.30pm *Working Lunch* (42003) 1.00 *Scene* (56596) 1.30 *Le Club* (98803848) 1.45 *Words and Pictures* (98803848) 2.00 *Just So Stories* (6767026)
2.10 *Sport on Friday* Helen Rollason introduces action from the downhill skiing event in Nagano, Japan. Plus a preview of the weekend's five nations' championship matches (232393)
3.55 *News* (1) regional news (2319954) 4.00 *Today's the Day* (480) 4.30 *Ready, Steady, Cook* (664) 5.00 *Esther* (8206) 5.30 *Golf, Golf, Golf* (816)
6.00 *Star Trek* (1) (1) (355480)
6.50 *Electric Circus* The latest entertainment news with Danni Minogue (10863)
7.00 *Pole to Pole* The second leg of Michael Palin's epic journey takes him to Russia (1) (1) (38786)
7.50 *A Week to Remember* (b/w) (315206)
8.00 *Birding with Bill* Oddie Oddie takes his binoculars to the Scottish Highlands, hoping to catch sight of some of Britain's rarest birds — ospreys, capercaillies and the golden eagle (1) (8190)
8.30 *Gardeners' World* Alan Titchmarsh strolls around the colourful terraces of the Mediterranean (1) (7225)
9.00 *Red Dwarf* Lister is a virus which has the power to kill him (1) (6577)
9.30 *The Two Fat Ladies* Comedy Cook-in-Clarsie, Dickson Wright and Jennifer Paterson host BBC2's Comedy Zone (1) (62887)
10.00 *Comedy Zone* The Two Fat Ladies present classic hilarity as they choose their all-time favourite British sitcom (1) (6190)
10.30 *Newsnight* (1) (841645)
11.15 *Space: Above and Beyond* (819206)
12.00 <



ATHLETICS 40

Father and son
thrown together
by common pursuit

SPORT

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 28 1997

CRICKET 41

Australia ready
to stay on
top of world



Pearce given managerial support

Bassett leaves Palace to help Forest revival

By DAVID MADDOCK

IT IS a week for pulling managerial rabbits out of hats. Following hard on the heels of Blackburn Rovers' surprise appointment of Roy Hodgson came the even more startling news, yesterday, that Dave Bassett is to leave Crystal Palace to become the general manager of Nottingham Forest.

The speed of the appointment is an indication that Irving Scholar, the former Tottenham Hotspur chairman, who is part of a consortium that purchased Forest this week, immediately recognised the need for an experienced head to help to steer Stuart Pearce, the player-manager, through the murky waters of football in the FA Carling Premiership.

Scholar confirmed last night that Bassett will not initially be involved in team affairs, leaving the way clear for Pearce to continue in his present role until the end of the season. However, the strong suggestion is that Bassett will assume control when Pearce's temporary contract as player-manager expires in the summer. The former Wimbledon and Sheffield United manager is hardly the type to be content with an administrative position and is likely to assume full control, with Pearce perhaps retained as player-coach.

The Bridgeford consortium that took a controlling interest

in the club promised £16 million to spend immediately on new players and it is Pearce's lack of experience and knowledge in this area that prompted the move for Bassett. He will immediately be given the decisive influence on transfer matters and be charged with finding the players to ensure the club's Premiership survival. He has, in effect, been brought in to buy players.

When he discussed the move yesterday, Bassett hinted strongly that he will assume a wider role when Pearce's temporary contract expires. "Stuart will still select the team and conduct the coaching until the end of the season, because he has a contract until then and he wants to do that. I won't step on his toes."

"He is happy for me to come in and I wouldn't have done so if he wasn't. We've known each other for some time, although not very well. He knows he needs somebody with experience and I'll be doing my best to help."

Bassett's move comes as a surprise not only for its speed and nature, but because he turned down a move to Manchester City only recently. At the time, he said that he found the future of Crystal Palace exciting: four months on, it appears that certain differences with the Palace chairman, Ron Noades, and

family demands have forced his hand.

Bassett's wife and children still live in Sheffield and the move to Nottingham will allow him to spend more time at home. Palace wanted Bassett to stay, but he invoked a clause in his contract.

"I insisted on having a clause inserted that said I could leave if a club came in offering compensation and Ron was as good as his word," Bassett said. "I'm pleased to have left in amicable circumstances, because this is the correct decision for me in terms of my career, financially and also domestically."

Ray Houghton, the Ireland midfielder, is the favourite to become player-coach at Palace, with Steve Coppell assuming, once again, the position of general manager. Coppell returned to the club for his third spell after resigning as manager of Manchester City earlier this season, citing health reasons. He is expected to play a mainly administrative role at the club.

Bassett has signed a three-year contract and Scholar hopes his experience, especially in the transfer market, will continue the improvement that Pearce began when he took temporary charge from Frank Clark, who resigned as manager in January. Bassett can at least work from a position of strength, not simply because he has £16 million to spend.

The prospect of playing for Forest, despite their struggles at the lower end of the Premiership, seems to be as strong as ever. If the attitude of Pierre van Hooijdonk is anything to go by, Rob Jansen, the Celtic and Holland striker's agent, said yesterday that Van Hooijdonk was eager to move to the City Ground.

"Celtic were ready to sell him recently and have discussions with some clubs in England," Jansen said. "If that situation is still the same, then it would be a possibility that he would come to Forest. He would like to stay in Great Britain."



Olazabal plays his second shot to the 1st in his encouraging comeback round of 69 yesterday. Photograph: David Cannon/Allsport

Olazabal quick to get back in the swing

FROM JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN DUBAI

IT WAS just after midday on another day of clear blue skies and bright sunshine when José María Olazabal made his way to the 1st tee at the Emirates Golf Club, in Dubai, yesterday to compete in his first competitive round of golf for 17 months.

As Sergio Gomez, his manager, and Maite, his wife, walked behind, Gomez pulled a cigar from the pocket of his shirt and plucked at the paper encircling it. "This is really an occasion," the man who has supported Olazabal, the 1994 Masters champion, through good times and bad, said. "Once the first drive is away, I shall light this Havana."

There was more to celebrate after Olazabal's 69, four strokes behind Domingo Hospital and Colin Montgomerie, the defending champion, who are the first-round leaders of the Dubai Desert Classic. To play as well as Olazabal did — he lies equal fourteenth — after what he has been through is most encouraging for his future and for that of European golf.

It was an afternoon of low scoring. Montgomerie, Bernhard Langer and Padraig Harrington were collectively 19 under par, with 19 birdies and one eagle between them. For Olazabal, a level-par 72 would have been a decent score and Montgomerie was loud in his praise. "For him to break 70 on a good golf course is tremendous," Montgomerie

said. "That should give him confidence." Further indication of what Olazabal achieved can be gauged from the comments of Greg Norman, who went round in 71 and described himself as "happy, it being my first competitive round for three months".

First-round scores 40

From the top of his head to the tips of his shoes, Olazabal was recognisably the Olazabal of old, except that he wore a peaked cap that looked one size too big. His walk has always appeared slightly drunken in the way he sways from side to side, and he has always leant forward as if

heading into a strong wind. That remained the same. When he, Jamie Spence and Barry Lane had to wait to play their second shots to the 10th, Olazabal took the opportunity to sit on the end of his bag. His striking appears to have lost little of its sharpness. After pars at the first two holes, he demonstrated the skills for which he was famous before suspected rheumatoid arthritis in his right foot and a back injury caused him to stop playing competitively in September 1995.

A wild drive on the 3rd ended in a bush. Olazabal dropped out under penalty and hacked back to the fairway. He was still 180 yards away but his six-iron was struck with such accuracy that it changed into the pin. He

finished closer to the flag from 180 yards than his partners did from 20.

Fog delayed the start for 75 minutes and, as Olazabal was behind a group containing Langer, progress was slow. Yet, when Olazabal, who was 31 earlier this month, might have begun to fade because of tiredness, he played better.

He birdied three of his last four holes, sinking putts of 30 feet on the 15th, 18 feet on the 16th and playing the last hole conservatively and skilfully. As darkness gathered, he hit a wedge from 90 yards to three feet for his fourth birdie of a momentous day.

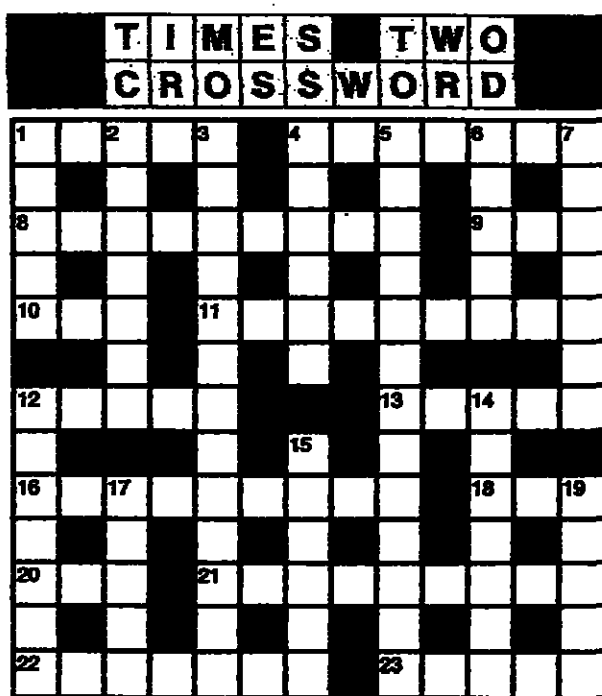
He would not reveal whether his feet were hurting at the end. Suffice to say that, for the moment, Olazabal has to take his recovery one step at a time.



Bassett: expertise

FACTFILE

1944: Born September 4, Wembley.
1973: Captained Watford & Hammersham to victory in Amateur Cup final against South Town.
1974: Joined Wimbledon, who were then in the Southern League.
1977: Made 35 appearances during first season as Football League club.
1981-88: Succeeded David Glad as manager and took Wimbledon from third division into the first.
1988: Became manager of Watford, but left shortly afterwards to take over at Sheffield United. United relegated to third division.
1988-90: Won promotion back to the second division, then to first.
1994: United relegated from Premier League on final day of season.
1995: Reappointed as United manager.
1996: Appointed as manager of Crystal Palace.
1997: Appointed general manager of Nottingham Forest.



No 1029

- | | |
|---|--|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Impose (the unwanted on) (5) | 1 Hurt; dance; love affair (5) |
| 4 Waterfall (7) | 2 Include; implicate (7) |
| 5 Untouchable (9) | 3 1984 orthodox enforcers (Orwell) (7,6) |
| 9 Lubricate (3) | 4 Chink (6) |
| 10 Hair-preparation; a semi-solid (3) | 5 Fail to conform (4,3,2,4) |
| 11 An explosive; a Plot (9) | 6 Keep away from (5) |
| 12 Fold, tuck (in garment) (5) | 7 Make bigger (7) |
| 13 Touch of colour (5) | 12 Myth, winged horse (7) |
| 14 Got too big, old for (4,3,2) | 14 US/Canada 4 ac (7) |
| 15 Synagogue cupboard; place of shelter (3) | 15 Melody; exert severely (6) |
| 20 Our star (3) | 17 Possessor (5) |
| 21 Lifeless (9) | 19 Got down (eg to pray) (5) |
| 22 Performer of operations (7) | |
| 23 Precise (5) | |

The solution to 1028 will be published Wednesday, March 5

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Premier League looks to Leaver

By BRIAN GLANVILLE

THE new chief executive of the FA Premier League is to be a barrister, Peter Leaver QC, who will assume his duties on April 3. Rick Parry, the present incumbent, will be working alongside him for a suitable period. Parry said yesterday that, by the time Leaver takes office, the so-called "bungs inquiry" and report into financial malpractices by football clubs in the transfer market, will be done and dusted.

On the face of it, contrasts between Parry and his successor could scarcely be greater.



Leaver: barrister

Parry, the provincial accountant; Leaver, the metropolitan lawyer.

Leaver, 52, has been supporting Tottenham Hotspur since his father took him to a game against Blackburn Rovers in 1950. He has been chairman of the Bar Committee, chairman of the International Practice Committee, Recorder of the Crown Court and a Deputy High Court Judge — not to mention a Tottenham director between

1982 and 1984, during the interregnum that followed the contentious chairmanship of Irving Scholar. Most encouraging of all, perhaps, Leaver gives up his Sunday mornings to referee minor football, though he says he finds it hard to keep up with the play.

Sir John Quinton, the FA Premier League chairman, said yesterday that Leaver has been engaged on the basis of a "rolling contract", though he would not divulge the salary. Quinton heaped praise on Parry, who, in his five years of office, has kept harmony among the 20 FA Carling Premiership clubs, but who now has agreed to take a job nearer his home, at Anfield with Liverpool FC.

Leaver would not commit himself to any plan or project. He said he first wanted to take up his position and assess situations, though he is anxious to keep things on an even keel.

This may not be easy. There is the problem of the Bosman decision and the presumption that football contracts are in restraint of trade. Not mentioned was the urging of Uefa, the European governing body, that all senior leagues, including the Premiership, be cut down to 18 clubs. There is also the issue of the dreadful plight of many smaller clubs and the distortion to the fixture list created by television.

"Obviously," Leaver said, "you see things which you think should be changed. It would be ludicrous if you didn't. My experience at the Bar has taught me not to try to come to firm conclusions until I know precisely what all the issues are."

Ashton handed brief by Ireland

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE remarkable transition in the fortunes of Brian Ashton culminated yesterday in an unprecedented six-year appointment as coach to Ireland. Two months ago, Ashton was in dispute with Bath and subsequently resigned after three successful years as coach to the English champions; now he has security of tenure until 2003, the period covering the next two World Cups.

Sporting security, of course, is subject to success on the field, but Ashton, 50 and a history teacher up to last July, could not have asked for more than appeared in the Irish Rugby Football Union's (IRFU) statement made in Dublin before Ireland left for tomorrow's five nations' championship meeting with Scotland.

Ashton himself has expressed doubts whether Ireland's standing can be improved without this kind of long-term commitment, which will involve working with provincial directors of rugby and advising on the A and under-21 teams.

We have tremendous faith in Brian's ability and commitment and recognise that we are at a critical juncture in our efforts to maintain Ireland at the top level," Eddie Coleman, the chairman of the IRFU elections committee, said.

Ashton, who will take up his new role on April 1, will go on the development tour of New Zealand and Western Samoa in May and will be part of a three-man selection committee along with Pat Whelan, the honorary manager up to the 1999 World Cup, and a third selector yet to be named. The reduction of the selectors from

five to three is in line with what most other leading unions have already done.

Political warfare in English rugby seems imminent yet again. Agreement between the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and the leading clubs may be one thing; agreement within the RFU itself remains quite another and some heavy guns have been rolled out in advance of the special general meeting, called in Birmingham by the Union for March 9.

Every club affiliated to the RFU has been circulated with a letter signed by Fran Cotton, the manager of the British Isles, Danie Serfontein, the RFU president in 1992-93, and Jeff Probyn, a national

Courting trouble 1
Rob Andrew 40
True professional 40

member of the RFU committee. The letter is designed to ensure that the chairman of the union's new management board — the equivalent to Cliff Brittle, the present chairman of the executive committee — is elected by the membership and not from within the committee, and that the post of chief executive should be subject to a rigorous selection process.

Richard Hill, the Saracens flanker, will be in the England team to play France at Twickenham tomorrow. Although Hill is not yet at 100 per cent fitness, he did enough in a private training session to convince the team management that his injured ankle will allow him to take the field.

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